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PERSPECTIVES IN BYZANTINE HISTORY AND
CULTURE

Dedicated to Father Dr. Joseph Gill, S. J.

Edited by
John F. Haldon
and
John T. A. Koumoulides



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PREFACE

The present collection aims to present a cross-section of current Byzantine research in Great Britain, and at the same time to serve as a useful introduction to some of the problems attracting the attention of historians today, an introduction which we hope will be of value not only to those working with the sources and the problems of Byzantine history, but also to those who are less familiar with such material. It represents at the same time a variety of approaches to the history of Byzantine culture and society, for the contributions reflect no single methodological or epistemological standpoint.

The collection is by no means, however, an 'Introduction to Byzantine History', for the reader will find here no general accounts of problems, approaches or source materials. The intention has been rather to ask questions, raise problems and revise opinions. And it is in this respect that the collection fulfills another aim, namely that of honouring Father Joseph Gill, S.J., on the occasion of his eighty first birthday and for his contribution to the study of the Byzantine and the medieval world. We include no biography of Father Gill, nor do we append a bibliography of his (numerous and valuable) publications, for this is not a *Festschrift* in the traditional sense. But we hope that he will accept it as a gesture of recognition and goodwill from all those who have contributed to its publication, and from Byzantinists in general.

The editors of this volume are grateful to the contributors for their spirit of cooperation and understanding. We wish to express our gratitude to Mr. Adolf M. Hakkert for his enthusiastic support and publication of the volume.

John F. Haldon
John T.A. Koumoulides

NOTE

This volume should have appeared in 1982/3, although circumstances beyond our control have delayed publication until now. The editors would like to express their gratitude to the contributors for their spirit of cooperation and understanding.

COLLECTIONS AND PERIODICALS CITED IN ABBREVIATION

<i>AB</i>	Analecta Bollandiana (Bruxelles 1882ff.)
<i>AS</i>	Acta Sanctorum (Antwerp 1643ff.)
<i>BBA</i>	Berliner Byzantinistische Arbeiten (Berlin 1955ff.)
<i>BCH</i>	Bulletin de Correspondance Hellénique (Paris 1877ff.)
<i>BS</i>	Byzantinoslavica (Praha 1929ff.)
<i>BZ</i>	Byzantinische Zeitschrift ([Leipzig] München 1892ff.)
<i>CEHE</i>	Cambridge Economic History of Europe (Cambridge 1941ff.)
<i>DOP</i>	Dumbarton Oaks Papers ([Cambridge, Mass.-] Washington 1941ff.)
<i>EHR</i>	English Historical Review (London 1885ff.)
<i>EO</i>	Échos d'Orient, 1-39 (Paris [Constantinople/Bucarest] 1897-1941ff.)
<i>GRBS</i>	Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies (1: Greek and Byzantine Studies) (Cambridge, Mass./Durham 1958ff.)
<i>JHS</i>	Journal of Hellenic Studies (London 1880ff.)
<i>JÖB</i>	Jahrbuch der österreichischen Byzantinistik, 18ff. (Wien-[Köln-Graz] 1969ff.)
<i>JÖBG</i>	Jahrbuch der österreichischen byzantinischen Gesellschaft, 1-17 (Wien-[Köln-Graz] 1951-1968)
<i>PG</i>	Patrologiae Cursus Completus, series Graeco-Latina, ed. J.P. Migne (Paris 1857-66; 1880-1903)
<i>PL</i>	Patrologiae Cursus Completus, series Latina, ed. J.P. Migne (Paris 1844ff.)
<i>PO</i>	Patrologiae Orientalis, edd. R. Graffin, F. Nau (Paris 1904ff.)
<i>PP</i>	Past and Present (London 1952ff.)
<i>REA</i>	Revue des Études Arméniennes, new series (Paris 1964ff.)
<i>REB</i>	Revue des Études Byzantines (vols.1-3: Études Byzanti-

- nes). ([Bucarest] Paris 1944ff.)
- ROC* Revue de l'Orient Chrétien, ser. 1, vols. 1-10 (Paris 1896-1905); ser. 2, vols. 1-10 (Paris 1906-1915/17); ser. 3, vols. 1-10 (Paris 1918/19-1935/6): vols. 1-30.
- TRHS* Transactions of the Royal Historical Society (London 1869ff.)
- VV* Vizantiiskii Vremmenik, vols. 1-25 (St. Petersburg [Leningrad] 1894-1927); new series (Moscow 1947ff.)
- ZRVI* Zbornik Radova (vols. 1-6; Vizantološki Institut, kn. 1-6 = Srpska Akademija Nauka, Zbornik Radova, kn. 21, 36, 44, 49, 59, 65) Vizantološkog Instituta (from vol. 7 [1961]) (Belgrade 1952ff.)

THE SHAPING OF THE MEDIEVAL BYZANTINE 'CITY'

MICHAEL ANGOLD / EDINBURGH

Recent work, a great deal of it by Professor Clive Foss,¹ has shown beyond reasonable doubt that in the course of the seventh century Byzantine city life was overturned. In Europe the immediate cause appears to have been Slav invasions and in Anatolia Persian occupation.² There are few signs of recovery until the mid-ninth century. It is the slowness of the recovery which most requires explanation. The cities of the near East often fell to invaders. Rarely did this occasion such long-term decline. In the third century A.D., for example, Goths and other assorted barbarians devastated the cities of the Aegean region. At Athens the *agora* was deserted, and there was a retreat to the Acropolis, where a new set of fortifications was built, but recovery was swift. By the end of the fourth century Athens was as large and as prosperous as it had ever been under Roman rule.³

Athens was not exceptional. There were many other Aegean cities which attained the height of their size and prosperity under the Late Roman Empire, though there were others, where decline had set in for good: Pergamon and Priene, for instance. In other words, late

¹ C. Foss, *Byzantine and Turkish Sardis* (Cambridge, Mass. 1976); *id.*, 'late Antique and Byzantine Ankara', *DOP* 31 (1977) 27-87; *id.*, 'Archaeology and the «Twenty Cities» of Byzantine Asia', *American Journal of Archaeology* 81 (1977) 469-86; *id.*, *Ephesus after Antiquity: a late antique, Byzantine and Turkish City* (Cambridge 1979). In addition, D. Claude, *Die byzantinische Stadt im 6. Jh.* (Munich 1969); G.L. Kurbatov, *Osnovnye problemy vnutrennego razvitiia vizantijskogo goroda v IV-VII vv.* (Leningrad 1971); C. Mango, *Byzantine Architecture* (New York 1976) pp. 30-57, and C. Mango, *Byzantium. The Empire of New Rome* (London 1980) pp. 60-87, are valuable recent contributions to the problem of the fate of the cities of late antiquity.

² C. Foss, 'The Persians in Asia Minor and the End of Antiquity', *EHR* 90 (1975) 721-47.

³ H.A. Thompson, 'Athenian Twilight: A.D. 267-600' *JRS* 49 (1959) 61-72.

Antiquity was not to witness a general revival of the Greek *polis*, which had been declining even before the third-century invasions. Efforts were made by one emperor after another to strengthen their core, the municipal councils, but they failed.

In the early Roman Empire the Greek *polis* retained a large measure of autonomy and responsibility for much of local government. By the third century it was increasingly unable to carry out its duties. To compensate the imperial government had to intervene more frequently in the internal affairs of the *polis*. It was clear that it no longer possessed the internal resources needed to generate its own recovery and that the necessary stimulus would have to come from outside, from the imperial government.

The centre of imperial government in the East was Byzantium, refounded by Constantine in 324. Its rise to economic and political pre-eminence was prodigious.⁴ Within less than a century it became a metropolis rivalling Rome in size. It provided a focus for a vast region stretching from the Danube to the Euphrates and from the Crimea to Crete, thus binding together a series of geographical areas which had never been united before. The growth of a new capital was bound to leave its mark on the cities of the region. Their interests would be increasingly subordinated to those of the capital. Contemporaries complained that «it ran to fat on the sweat of other cities».⁵ Perhaps this can be taken as an admission that provincial cities were becoming geared towards meeting the demands of Constantinople. These would create a much clearer hierarchy of cities than had existed previously and would produce a rationalization of urban life. Those cities which had no place within the new dispensation withered away, but those that had a role to play did very well. The size and importance of a city now depended much less on local conditions, and more on its place in a system of imperial government centred on Constantinople. The impressive amount of building activity which went on in many late antique cities was largely the work of provincial governors appointed from Constantinople. There are also examples of emperors intervening directly to endow a city with public buildings or even streets. Private individuals with a successful career at Constantinople behind them might

⁴ G. Dagron, *Naissance d'une capitale. Constantinople et ses institutions de 330 à 451* (Paris 1974).

⁵ Libanios, *Discours*, ed. J. Martin and transl. P. Petit (Paris 1979), I, p. 202, 11. 10-11 (= cclxxix).

remember their native city and embellish it with a building or some statuary. Very little of the building that went on in the provincial cities in the fifth and sixth centuries was paid for out of local wealth.

This dependence upon the capital made provincial cities vulnerable, but, as long as Constantinople prospered, their prospects remained bright. Constantinople, however, proved to have an Achilles heel. It depended heavily for its food supplies on Syria and Egypt. It drew much of its olive oil from northern Syria, while Egypt supplied an annual corn tribute of 8,000,000 *artabae*, enough, it is reckoned, to feed 600,000 people for a year.⁶ The loss of Syria to the Persians in 614 was serious enough, but the fall of Egypt in 619 had disastrous consequences for the imperial capital. These were anticipated in the previous year when the Emperor Heraclius officially ended the free dole of corn to the citizens of Constantinople. In 626 the city came under siege from the Avars. They cut the aqueduct of Valens, the main water supply for the city. The siege was soon over, but the aqueduct was not repaired for nearly 150 years. The impressive system of waterworks, with which Roman engineering had endowed the city, was allowed to run down. Cisterns were used for burying plague victims or might be turned into market gardens, as the capital sought to feed itself.⁷ Since the water supply is one of the determinants of the size of any city, this all points to a dramatic fall in the size of Constantinople's population after the loss of Egypt to the Persians. The Arab conquests that followed so soon upon the Persian meant that the capital had no chance to recover. It was this, much more than the Persian invasions of Asia Minor, which will explain the collapse of urban life in the Byzantine Empire. Provincial cities needed the stimulus of the capital, but it no longer possessed the necessary resources to provide this.

Constantinople had instead to concentrate on its own survival. There were two Arab sieges in 674-678 and in 717-718. The morale of the capital remained surprisingly high. In the face of all the perils of the time a strong sense of identity was forged around the figure of the Mother of God. It was believed that under her divine protection the city would not fall to any enemy. The whole strength and being of the

⁶ A.H.M. Jones, *The Later Roman Empire, 284-602* (Oxford 1964) II, p. 698.

⁷ J. Teall, 'The Grain Supply of the Byzantine Empire', *DOP* 13 (1959) 89, 103.

Empire was now concentrated in the capital.⁸

Virtually all the urban functions of the Empire were fixed in the capital. Instead of confining foreign trade to places on the frontiers of the Empire, as was the custom under the Later Roman Empire, foreign exchanges were now concentrated in the capital.⁹ Seals show that a customs service continued to function, but when you find that in the same year one man is responsible for the customs of both Korykos in southern Anatolia and Mesembria on the European shores of the Black Sea, then the only sensible conclusion is that he worked from Constantinople.¹⁰ It is, as though the class of imperial functionaries, so important in the life of the provincial city, was withdrawn or sought refuge in the capital. There was a retreat to the inner core of the Empire around Constantinople and the sea of Marmora. Here a few cities, such as Nicaea, continued to exist, though in this case its main economic function was to supply Constantinople with vegetables.^{10bis} Outside this kernel of the Empire there were a few places, which managed to survive the period of invasions and remained centres of continuing Byzantine influence. Thessalonica is an obvious example, and Ephesus and Trebizond, though much reduced in size, are others. There were also one or two new places, founded as refuges from the invaders: Monemvasia on the south eastern tip of the Peloponnese, for example. Even so, the network of cities dependent upon Constantinople was drastically simplified. The capital was hardly even capable of supporting them. Thessalonica was for long periods cut off from Constantinople and thrown back on its own resources. At one point in the second half of the seventh century there was a real danger that it might secede.¹¹

Such control as the capital exercised over the provinces was no longer through cities, so much as through local armies, known as themes. These were slowly transformed from the late seventh century onwards into an *ad hoc* system of local administration and defence, in

⁸ N.H. Baynes, *Byzantine Studies and Other Essays* (London 1960); P.J. Alexander, 'The Strength of the Empire and Capital as seen through Byzantine Eyes', *Speculum*, 37 (1962) 339-57.

⁹ R.S. Lopez, *Byzantium and the World Around it* (London 1978), no. V.

¹⁰ H. Antoniadès-Bibicou, *Recherches sur les douanes à Byzance* (Paris 1963) pp. 226-30.

^{10bis} M.J. de Goeje, *Bibliotheca geographorum Arabicorum*. VI (Leyden, 1889), p. 74.

¹¹ E.g. *Les Plus Anciens Recueils des Miracles de Saint Démétrius*, ed. P. Lemerle (Paris 1979) I, pp. 208-10.

which cities had almost no place. This was still the case in the middle of the ninth century, when the Arab geographer, Ibn Khurradadbeh, came to consider the condition of the Byzantine Empire. It had become a land of themes, with their fortresses, military camps, and staging posts. Ibn Khurradadbeh dignifies a number of places with the name of city: Nicomedia, though ruined, Nicaea, Ephesus, Amorion, and Ankyra.¹² With the possible exception of Nicomedia these were all theme capitals. They were not the great cities of late antiquity. Ankyra, for instance, fell to the Persians in 622, and was thoroughly devastated. It was strongly refortified in the mid-seventh century, but the new walls only enclosed an area of some 350 by 150 metres.¹³ This was the core of the city. The lower part of the acropolis was not fortified until after the middle of the ninth century. It is obvious that it had the aspect and function of a fortress rather than a city. Ephesus was slightly different. It was much less clearly just a fortress. On the other hand, its new walls built at some point in the late seventh or eighth century enclosed an area less than half the size of that of the late antique city. There was little else in the way of new building. It was mostly a question of patching up the ruined buildings of the old city and adapting them to new purposes. The decay of the city is reflected in the fate of its cathedral church. This was a vast basilica, more than 100 metres long, which was built at the turn of the fourth century. In the eighth or ninth century it was replaced by a new church, only half its size, in keeping with reduced size of the city.¹⁴

By this time Ephesus was recovering some of its commercial importance. It was the site of an annual fair, worth £100 of gold to the state.¹⁵ This is the first clear testimony of something that would come to have an important place in Byzantine city life: the annual fair held on the feast day of a city's patron saint. In the classical world the fair was a rural phenomenon, the city being content to rely upon its market. The existence of a fair at Ephesus clearly marks a change in the organization of local exchanges, but the information is tantalizingly slight. Does it mean that there was a more or less spontaneous growth

¹² De Goeje, *loc. cit.*, pp. 77-80.

¹³ Foss, 'Ankara', pp. 70-80.

¹⁴ Foss, *Ephesus*, pp. 103-15.

¹⁵ Theophanes, *Chronographia*, ed. C. de Boor (Leipzig 1885) I, pp. 469-70

of local exchanges, which did not involve, even indirectly, the capital? This would be a plausible inference from the originally rural character of the fair. The argument would be much like that deployed by some historians of the early middle ages in western Europe: that the economy and with it society were being rebuilt from the bottom upwards. Though often superficially attractive, comparisons between Byzantium and the West in the early middle ages nearly always fail because the West had no centre that could remotely compare with Constantinople.

In the West the retreat to the countryside can be explained in terms of the failure of the city, but in the Byzantine Empire it was a condition of Constantinople's survival during the seventh and eighth centuries. Bereft of the agricultural wealth of Egypt and Syria it turned to Anatolia for its supplies of foodstuffs. Its demands hampered revival of urban life in Anatolia, because virtually any surplus of agricultural goods would have been swallowed up by the capital, leaving little for the renewed growth of provincial centres. These demands increased from the middle of the eighth century when Constantinople's population began to grow once more. In 766 the Emperor Constantine V transferred workmen from Greece and the Pontus region to repair the aqueduct of Valens: surely a sign that the population was growing.¹⁶ By the end of the eighth century the Byzantine Empire consisted of a capital, which was by the standards of the time a very considerable city, and an almost exclusively agricultural hinterland, which was divided up into military commands. The only places worthy of the name of city were the theme capitals, but even these were more like fortresses than the cities of late antiquity.

At some stage, the wealth, population, and demand represented by the capital would begin to stimulate the rural economy of the hinterland. This was already beginning to happen in the second half of the eighth century, when a surcharge was imposed upon the basic land-tax in order to pay for the repairs to the aqueduct of Valens. It was noted at the time that this produced the illusion of greater prosperity because the peasantry were forced to put a greater proportion of their produce on to the market in order to pay the new tax.¹⁷ Here we have an exam-

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 440, 11. 19-24; Nicephorus, *Opuscula Historica*, ed. C. de Boor (Leipzig 1880) pp. 75-76

¹⁷ Nicephorus, p. 76, 11. 7-14.

ple of the way the demands of the central government stimulated a peasant economy, which would otherwise have remained more or less closed. A story from a saint's life gives us an insight into the peasant mentality: a peasant would go to a local fair, where he would sell off some of his produce and barter the rest.¹⁸ It is easy to see that the role of the fair was likely to be enhanced as soon as the peasantry were forced to sell off more and more of their produce in order to obtain more money to pay heavier taxes. In this lies the most likely explanation not so much of the mere existence of a fair at Ephesus at the end of the eighth century, but more of its flourishing condition.

The wealth of the countryside may have been siphoned off to the capital in the form of taxation, but from the beginning of the ninth century there is good evidence that money was being pumped back in considerable sums to the provinces. It came, above all, in the shape of the wages paid to the soldiers of the theme armies. These were put on a regular footing, as a result of a comprehensive overhaul of the fiscal and military administration carried out at the beginning of the ninth century by the Emperor Nicephorus I (802-11).¹⁹ In the year 808/809 the Bulgarians seized the war chest of the small border theme of Strymon. It contained no less than £1,100 of gold.²⁰ Money was being recycled between capital and provinces. It was an operation that went through the military organization. At the very least, the theme capitals ought to have derived some economic benefit.

Such an argument receives support from numismatic evidence. Until the early ninth century there is not much sign outside Constantinople of the circulation of bronze and copper coins, which would have been the currency of petty exchanges. This must mean that only in the capital was money in everyday use. A change comes in the reigns of Michael II (820-29) and his son Theophilus (829-42), when the first large scale issues of a bronze coinage since the early seventh century were made. These were presumably designed to cater for a growth of petty exchanges at a local level. Numerous examples of these coins have turned up in the excavations at Corinth.²¹ It was reoccupied by

¹⁸ Antoniadis-Bibicou, *op. cit.*, pp. 247-49.

¹⁹ Theophanes I, pp. 486-87.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 484-85.

²¹ D. M. Metcalf, 'How extensive was the issue of folles during the years 775-820', *B 37* (1967) 270-310;

the Byzantines at the beginning of the ninth century and became the headquarters of the military governor of the Peloponnese.²²

All the signs are that urban life recovered more quickly in Greece than in Anatolia. This is the more surprising because the Greek lands had been more or less cut off from Constantinople for nearly two centuries by the Slavs. The differences in the organization of the theme system between Anatolia and the Greek lands offer a possible clue to the greater strength of urban life in Greece. While the themes of Anatolia were created as a means of defence against the Arabs, those of Greece served to hold down newly-occupied territories. The first step in their establishment was to reoccupy the semi-deserted sites of the main cities of antiquity and from these bases effect the pacification of the countryside. The themes in the Greek lands worked through the cities and depended less on the countryside than was the case in Asia Minor. We have also seen how urban growth in Anatolia was held in check by its role as a supplier of foodstuffs to the markets of Constantinople. Greece never had this role to the same extent. Economically, it was less subservient to the needs of the capital.

By the early tenth century the theme system in both Greece and Asia Minor was beginning to change. The Empire was going on the offensive and there was less need for local troops recruited from the peasantry of the theme, and more for professionals, who would be able to undertake protracted campaigns beyond the frontiers of the Empire. The armies of the themes remained in existence, but it became quite usual to commute their military service and just supply a small body of professional troops. This practice is first attested in 934 for the theme of the Peloponnese,²³ and it soon spread to Anatolia. It contributed to a deterioration in the position of the peasantry. There was less chance now of a peasant family benefitting from the rewards of military service. Peasant holdings passed on an increasing scale under the control of the 'powerful', as they were called. These included among others the officers and professional soldiers of the themes, who congregated in the towns and fortresses. Their presence and spending

id., 'Corinth in the ninth century: the numismatic evidence', *Hesperia* 42 (1973) 180-251.

²² A. Bon, *Le Péloponnèse byzantin* (Paris 1951), p. 94

²³ Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *De Administrando Imperio*, I, ed. by G. Moravcsik and transl. by R. J. H. Jenkins (Washington D.C. 1967) pp. 256-57; II (London 1962) pp. 204-205.

power started to turn these into centres of consumption, places too from which they could manage their lands, which lay in the surrounding countryside. In this way, the theme began to give way to the provincial town as the focus of local life, a development which became clearer in the course of the eleventh century.²⁴

This coincided with a new phase of building in many Byzantine cities. Before this there is little sign of building. It was mostly a question of some hasty fortifications and patching up of ruins. Occasionally, churches or cathedrals might be built or rebuilt. More often the great basilicas of late antiœuity were allowed to decay, made redundant by the decline of city life. This is a matter of some importance, because it is often assumed that the cathedral and the bishop constituted the core around which the medieval city was built. It has been strongly argued that the Byzantine city must have survived more or less intact through the Dark Ages because the patriarchate of Constantinople maintained a full complement of bishops.²⁵ This argument works in a few exceptional cases. Life in Thessalonica revolved around the archbishop, who was the organiser and orchestrator of the cult of St Demetrius, the city's patron saint. This gave its citizens the self-confidence and the sense of solidarity to surmount a series of crises. But this was not the normal pattern. The presence of a bishop and the existence of a cathedral did not prevent a city dwindling away.

It would probably be wrong to assume that once a city had decayed its bishop automatically sought refuge in the capital. St Euthymius, bishop of Sardis in the early ninth century,²⁶ is known to have been resident in his see, even though Sardis was then nothing but a fortress, with one or two villages dotted among the ruins of the ancient city. The old cathedral was clumsily patched up about this time. One can perhaps imagine St Euthymius striving to keep services going amidst the ruins. In other cases, the cathedral might be almost all that was left of the ancient city. This is what happened at the ancient Di-

²⁴ A.P. Kazhdan, *Derevna i gorod v Vizantii IX-X vv. Ocherki po istorii vizantijskogo feodalizma* (Moscow 1960) remains the essential work.

²⁵ E.g. Ostrogorsky, 'Byzantine Cities in the early middle ages', *DOP* 13 (1959) pp. 45-66.

²⁶ A. Papadakis, 'An unpublished Life of Euthymius of Sardis', *Traditio* 26 (1970) 63-89; Foss, *Sardis*, pp. 53-66.

dyma, known to the Byzantines as Hieron. It consisted of a fortified church and a small castle, which was rebuilt in the tenth century. Attached to it was a hamlet.²⁷ Some spark of city life was thus preserved. To that extent the bishop and his cathedral provided the Byzantine city with a measure of continuity.

Their most valuable contribution was almost certainly made in that period from the late eighth century, when there are the first tentative signs of urban renewal. The bishop was often a powerful figure locally, who was long remembered: St Peter, bishop of Argos from the end of the ninth century, for instance.²⁸ In this period too a number of reasonably impressive cathedrals were built.²⁹ This tails off in the course of the tenth century. It seems to have virtually come to a halt in the eleventh century and was only resumed in the mid-twelfth century and then only on a modest scale.^{29bis}

What is the explanation? Poverty, most likely. There is a letter written at the end of the tenth century by a bishop of Synada in Phrygia to the Emperor Basil II. He complained of the poverty of his see. To maintain any sort of standard of living he and his clergy were dependent upon imperial pensions. His church was fortunate enough to have been in receipt of various imperial chrysobulls³⁰ and must therefore have been in a more favourable position than most bishoprics. Bishops suffered from having no fixed revenues beyond the incomes from their estates. In many cases the latter seem to have suffered from the practice of *charistike* or lay patronage of monastic estates. *Charistike* more or less disappears from the beginning of the twelfth century and at the same time the *kanonikon*, a tax payable to bishops, was regularized.³¹ From this time on bishops were able to build up the estates and the wealth of their sees. By the end of the twelfth century the bishop had

²⁷ L. Robert, 'Sur Didymes à l'époque byzantine', *Hellenica* 11-12 (1960) 490-505; C. Foss, 'The «Twenty Cities»', 478-79.

²⁸ A.A. Vasiliev, 'The «Life» of St Peter of Argos and its historical significance', *Traditio* 5 (1947) 163-91. Cf. J. Darrouzès *Epistoliers byzantins du Xe siècle* (Paris 1960) pp. 314-15.

²⁹ E.g. the group of churches at Thessalonica, Myra, Ankara, Nicaea, and Vize discussed by C. Mango, *Byzantine Architecture*, p. 165.

^{29bis} C. Mango, 'Les monuments de l'architecture du XIe siècle et leur signification historique et sociale', *Travaux et Mémoires* 6 (1976) 351-65.

³⁰ Darrouzès, *op. cit.*, pp. 198-99.

³¹ P. Charanis, 'Monastic Properties and the State in the Byzantine Empire', *DOP* 4 (1948) 76-77; H.

become what he was to remain: the most powerful figure in city life.

II

In the crucial period from the late tenth century of sustained urban growth the bishop does not figure very prominently. The new quarters which grew up tended to focus on monasteries and churches. Little of this building was done under the inspiration of the bishop; most of it was the work of holy men or their patrons, who came from the leading local families.

The work of archaeologists has shown quite conclusively that Byzantine cities were once more beginning to prosper. From the end of the tenth century the open spaces of the *agorai* at Corinth and Athens, for example, began to be covered with new buildings and new streets and alleys.³² Almost everywhere coin finds are plentiful,^{32bis} but evidence of all types suggests that urban revival was strongest around the Aegean and the Sea of Marmora.

This impression receives some support from the Geography of Edrisi, which was completed at the Sicilian court in 1154.³³ It is the nearest thing there is to a gazeteer of the Byzantine Empire in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. It is very well informed about the European provinces of the Empire, very badly informed about the Anatolian provinces, despite a visit the author claims he made to Ephesus in 1117.³⁴ Much of his information about Asia Minor predates the eleventh century. There is a remark to the effect that Melitene had

Ahrweiler, 'Charisticariat et autres formes d'attribution de fondations pieuses aux X-XIe siècles', *ZRVI* 10 (1967) 1-27; *Cambridge Medieval History*, IV, part 2, pp. 121-122.

³² R.L. Scranton, *Medieval Architecture in the Central Area of Corinth* (Corinth XVI) (Princeton 1957) pp. 34-83; D.M. Metcalf, 'Corinth in the ninth century', *Hesperia* 42 (1973) 180-251; C. Delvoye in *B* 25-27 (1955-1957) 927-39; F.W. Deichman, in *BZ* 54 (1961) 159-62; I.N. Travlos, *Poleodmike exelixis ton Athenon apo ton proistorikon khronon mekhri ton arkhon tou 19ou aionos* (Athens 1960) pp. 149-62.

^{32bis} M.F. Hendy, 'Byzantium, 1081-1204: An Economic Reappraisal', *TRHS* ser. v., 20 (1970) 31-52.

³³ *Géographie d'Idrisi*, transl. by P. Jaubert (Paris 1836) 2 vols.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, II, p. 303

been prosperous until the Byzantine invasions.³⁵ He must mean those in the early tenth century. He also mentions that Ankyra had been ruined in the time of troubles.³⁶ This may refer to the sack of the city by the Paulicians in 871³⁷ or possibly to the civil wars which shook Asia Minor in the last quarter of the tenth century. Otherwise, there is precious little information about the cities of Anatolia. Only Nicaea is singled out as a place of any size and prosperity.³⁸ This may only be a reflection of the inadequacies of Edrisi's sources of information. On the other hand, he is full of details about the routes across Anatolia, which emerges as a land criss-crossed with roads. Along them were staging posts and one or two larger centres. Such a place was Ikonion. It is described by the eleventh-century historian Michael Attaleiates as *apoliteia*, which the historian uses to denote a city of some importance. It was the centre of a wide region and possessed a flourishing livestock market.³⁹

Euchaita in the Pontus region performed a very similar role. We know something about it in the eleventh century from the letters and sermons of John Mavropous, who was sent there as bishop in 1047.⁴⁰ He arrived in the depths of winter. The bleakness of the surrounding countryside intimidated him.⁴¹ But it took on a different aspect in spring. There was a fair which attracted people and livestock from the surrounding region, which also produced wheat on a large scale. The city itself seems to have been populous and possessed impressive buildings in addition to the cathedral.⁴² These details come from sermons preached by a bishop. John Mavropous may have been pandering to the self-esteem of his congregation. The impression, nevertheless, remains of a place of some size and prosperity. It was, of course, a great centre of pilgrimage, containing the chief shrine of St Theodore the

³⁵ *Ibid.*, II, p. 138.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, II, p. 312.

³⁷ Foss, *Ankara*, 80.

³⁸ Idrisi, II, p. 302.

³⁹ Michael Attaleiates, *Historia* (Bonn 1853) p. 135.

⁴⁰ *Iohannis Euchaitorum Metropolitae quae in Codice Vaticano 676 supersunt*, ed. P. Lagarde (Göttingen 1882)

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, no. 64, pp. 87-88.

⁴² *Ibid.*, no. 80, esp. pp. 135-6; no. 184, pp. 160-5; no. 189, pp. 207-9.

Recruit, one of the most popular of Byzantium's military saints.⁴³

The Anatolian plateau seems to have contained a number of fairly large cities in the eleventh century: places, such as Melitene, Cappadocian Caesarea, Sevasteia, Euchaita, Amaseia, Ankyra, Ikonion, Amorion, and Dorylaion. They stood at important junctions of Anatolia's road system, possessed markets and fairs, which made them centres for an extensive region, and were almost all important places of pilgrimage. Anatolia was a land of a few cities and great, wide open spaces, an impression borne out by the account of St Lazarus of Galesion's travels through Anatolia in the late tenth century, returning from pilgrimage to Jerusalem.⁴⁴

City life in the interior of the Balkans and in the north of Greece has many of the same characteristics. The chief centres were strung out along the main roads across the peninsula. Edrisi is, however, much better informed about conditions in the Balkans than he is about Anatolia. His information relates to the period of peace which followed Alexius I Comnenus's victory over the Norman ruler, Bohemund, in 1108. He notes the names of many prosperous centres scattered through the Balkans and the north of Greece: Ohrid, Skoplje, Ioannina, Kastoria, Trikala, and Larissa, for example. They owed their wealth not to commerce, but to their position in the middle of rich agricultural areas.⁴⁵ To the South the Peloponnese receives a glowing description from Edrisi's pen. It had many famous towns with well established markets and many villages and fortresses depending on them. Its people owned ships and there were a number of small but flourishing ports, such as Arcadia and Monemvasia.⁴⁶

The most successful places of commerce singled out by Edrisi lay along the sea route joining Greece and Constantinople: Halmyros, Platamon, Christopolis (Kavalla), Abydos (St George), Panados, and Raideostos.⁴⁷ The Itinerary of Benjamin of Tudela, who travelled through this region in the 1160s, amplifies this information. It is obvi-

⁴³ H. Delehaye, 'Euchaita et la légende de S. Théodore', in *Anatolian Studies presented to Sir W.M. Ramsay*, ed. by W.H. Buckler and W.M. Calder (Manchester 1923) pp. 129-34.

⁴⁴ A.A.S.S. Nov., III, pp. 517-518.

⁴⁵ Idrisi, II, pp. 288-91.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 122-126.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 269-98.

ous that Thebes and Thessalonica, which are ignored by Edrisi, were great centres of trade and manufactures, as was Corinth.⁴⁸

Edrisi provides succinct descriptions of some of these places. They are valuable, if only because no detailed descriptions of Byzantine cities at this time have come down to us. It was only in the thirteenth century that the literary genre of the *ekphrasis* or description of a city was revived.^{48bis} Edrisi describes Platamon as having magnificent, tall buildings; Raideostos as having close-packed houses; Panados as having many houses, streets, bazaars and squares; Christopolis as having beautiful markets and important trade. Are these descriptions borne out by the testimony of archaeological and documentary evidence? Not entirely, but Raideostos, at least, seems to be typical of Byzantine cities of this period, which have been excavated: close-packed houses being the characteristic feature. At Sardis, for example, the space within the fortress walls was jam-packed with new houses.⁴⁹ At Corinth and Athens, as we have seen, rebuilding spilled out into their *agorai*, which were quickly filled with a maze of alleys and a jumble of houses and workshops. This new phase of building was entirely spontaneous. There are no of plainning and apparently no attempt at monumentality.

Edrisi's most enthusiastic remarks are reserved for Abydos, with its broad streets, beautiful houses, and magnificent bazaars.⁵⁰ Here an element of monumentality and planning does seem to have been in evidence. Abydos was the main Byzantine customs station on the Hellespont, operating with almost no break from the fifth century onwards.⁵¹ It seems likely that it was one of those relatively few places which retained a regular plan from late antiquity. This was the result not of deliberate intent, just a fact of continuity. Thessalonica has preserved to this very day some semblance of its classical plan, but this was not because the Byzantines observed the classical distinctions between private and public space. Just as at Corinth and Athens, where continuity through the middle ages was far less marked, so at Thessalonica the

⁴⁸ *The Itinerary of Benjamin of Tudela*, transl. by M.N. Adler (London 1907), pp. 10-11

^{48bis} A.P. Kazhdan, 'Some questions addressed to scholars who believe in the authenticity of Kameniates' «Capture of Thessalonica» *BZ* 71 (1978) 304-5.

⁴⁹ Foss, *Sardis*, p. 70.

⁵⁰ Idrisi, II, p. 297.

⁵¹ Antoniadis-Bibicou, *op. cit.*, pp. 76-79.

agora started to be built over in the eleventh century. The one major church, which has survived at Thessalonica from the eleventh century, Our Lady of the Coppersmiths,⁵² was built over its south western corner. The *agora* was also the site in this period of workshops.⁵³

Thessalonica was the second city of the Empire. By modern standards it was more obviously a city than the great majority of Byzantine cities. It had considerable trade and was the site of a famous annual fair, to which merchants flocked from the length and the breadth of the Mediterranean.^{53bis} It was a centre of manufactures. It was by the standards of the time densely populated and heavily built up. Yet it is normally referred to in the documentary sources as the *kastron* or fortress of Thessalonica.⁵⁴ It is clear that in this and in other cases the term is intended to cover the whole city and does not simply designate the citadel.⁵⁵ *Kastron* is not so widely employed in the literature of the time. *Polis*, *politeia*, and *asty* are more usual terms, but in everyday speech *kastron* was the word most likely to be used for a city. It tells us something of how contemporaries regarded the city. It was first and foremost a fortress, a place of refuge and security. Its encircling walls would be its most obvious characteristic. It underlines the extent to which most Byzantine cities were rooted in the fortresses of the Dark Ages. It also warns us not to expect too much from the Byzantine city. I shall for convenience sake use 'city' for a handful of urban centres, places such as Thessalonica and Nicaea, and 'town' for the rest. It does correspond to a historical pattern: the cities were mostly those that survived intact through the Dark Ages, while the towns are almost places that grew from the end of the tenth century.

Should any settlement described as a *kastron*, not obviously a city, therefore be treated as a town? Certainly not. Take the *kastron* of Pantelion on the island of Leros, for example. Within its walls there was a church surrounded by some cells and lower down five houses, five cells, and a covered cistern. The houses were built of stone and clay and had tiled roofs; they normally consisted of one upper room, but

⁵² J.-M. Speiser, 'Les inscriptions de Thessalonique', *Travaux et Mémoires* 5 (1973) 163-4.

⁵³ *Actes de Lavra*, I (Archives de l'Athos V) (Paris 1970) no. 59, 1.7, p. 308, 111.

^{53bis} Pseudo-Luciano, *Timarione*, ed. R. Romano (Naples 1974) caps. 3-6.

⁵⁴ E.g. *Actes de Lavra*, I, no. 59, 11.3, 8, 50, p. 308, 11.4, 14, p. 309, 1.41.

⁵⁵ E.g. at Athens: E. Granstrom, I. Medvedev, D. Papachrysanthou, 'Fragment d'un praktikon de la région d'Athènes (avant 1204)', *REB* 34 (1976) 33, A2, 1.6.

some had cellars, and one had a balcony.⁵⁶ Walls did not by themselves a city make. There had to be other features. As a rule of thumb, these would normally be a market or a fair, some administrative and fiscal functions,⁵⁷ and also the presence of a bishop, despite his relative lack of importance. Places meeting such criteria were often quite small: Lampsakos on the Hellespont, for example. It was the seat of a bishop. In the early thirteenth century it possessed a mere 163 households. No fewer than 113 of these were engaged in agriculture, but it had a port with a market which dealt in wine, corn, and olive oil. It brought in the not inconsiderable annual revenue of more than 1,000 *nomismata*.⁵⁸ The combination of agriculture and trade in agricultural commodities was typical of many small Byzantine towns. There was only a thin line dividing them from fortified villages, such as the *kastron* of Adramerion near Thessalonica. In 1076 its inhabitants were involved in communal action in a dispute they had over some fields with the monastery of the Lavra. Theirs was a community of joint-taxpayers, like any Byzantine village.⁵⁹ This suggests that whatever communal institutions they had would have been much the same as those of a Byzantine village, most notably a court presided over by the local priests and elders.

Did Byzantine towns and cities have any institutions which would distinguish them from a village? In many ways, at least until after 1204, it is a lack of distinctive institutions, which is so striking. In most towns and cities a group known as the *archontes* possessed considerable influence, without it receiving any clear institutional form. They came from the most prominent landowning families resident in a particular town or city and often held posts in local government. We catch an early glimpse of their activities in the pages of the Life of St Nikon.⁶⁰ He was a holy man who settled at the turn of the tenth century at Sparta, or Lakedaimon, as the Byzantines preferred to call it. He was

⁵⁶ F. Miklosich and J. Müller, *Acta et diplomata graeca medii aevi*. VI (Vienna 1890) p. 36, 11.1-3, pp. 40-41. Cf. N. Oikonomides, 'The Donation of Castles', in *Polychronion*, ed. P. Wirth (Heidelberg 1966) pp. 413-17.

⁵⁷ E.g. the *kastron* of Hierissos: *Actes de Lavra*, I, no. 39, 1.4, p. 223, 1.7.

⁵⁸ G. L. F. Tafel and G. M. Thomas, *Urkunden zur älteren Handels und Staatsgeschichte der Republik Venedig* (Vienna 1856) II, pp. 208-9. Cf. G. G. Litavrin, 'Provintsial'nyj vizantijskij gorod na rubezhe XII-XIII vv.', *VV* 37 (1976) pp. 17-29.

⁵⁹ *Actes de Lavra*, I, no. 37, pp. 213-15: *synepoikoi kai syntelestai*.

⁶⁰ *Ho Bios Nikonos tou Metanoieite*, ed. by Sp. P. Lampros in *NE* 3 (1906).

invited in by its *archontes*. They knew of his reputation and hoped that he might be able to rid their town of a plague, which he duly did.⁶¹ In return, they were only too willing to help him when he wished to build a church. He chose a site on the edge of the ancient *agora*, which was now deserted and was used by the *archontes* as a polo field (*tzykanisterion*).^{61bis} They let him have the site, which seems to show that the *agora* was considered their property. The building of the church was going to involve the whole town. St Nikon organized processions with the object of collecting the necessary building materials. Two of the *archontes* donated an antique column apiece. The citizens down to the very poorest provided food and drink for the workforce which assembled, while the *archontes* found the wages of the masons.⁶² These episodes from a saint's life illustrate how, in practice, most of what happened in a provincial town was controlled by the *archontes*. Theoretically, power was vested in the hands of the provincial governor and his staff, but they were usually absent, resident in the capital of the theme. In theme capitals, such as Thebes and Thessalonica, the provincial governor was a man of power,^{62bis} but, elsewhere, everyday life was regulated by the *archontes*, if with a suitable show of deference to the imperial authorities. It was on this informal basis that the autonomy of the towns and cities in the eleventh and twelfth centuries would grow.

The *archontes* apart, it is difficult to detect any clear shape to urban society. *Geitoniai* or neighbourhoods were a feature of some cities. In Thessalonica they centred on churches and had at their head a *geitoniarches*,⁶³ the only municipal office attested. In Athens their focus was not necessarily a church.⁶⁴ One neighbourhood was the quarter of the fishers for purple, which suggests that different trades may have been concentrated in different areas of a city. Except in Thessalonica there is no evidence for craft associations,⁶⁵ but there

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 162-163.

⁶² *Ibid.*, pp. 164-165.

^{62bis} *Tzykanisteria* are also attested at Ephesus and Athens, as well as Constantinople, and almost count as a feature of urban life at Byzantium.

^{62bis} *Timarion*, caps. 7-10.

⁶³ *Actes de Lavra*, I, no. 53, l. 17, 34, p. 277, l. 20, p. 278, l. 2; no. 59, ll. 4, 6, p. 308, ll. 7, 10.

⁶⁴ For Athens, see *REB* 34 (1976) 33-35.

⁶⁵ E.g. *Actes de Lavra*, I, p. 278, l. 13.

were confraternities. There was one at Thebes devoted to an image of the Mother of God kept in the nunnery of 'the Ladies of Naupaktos'.⁶⁶ This confraternity was founded in 1048 and was still in existence in the twelfth century. Each month the brotherhood went in procession to the church and took the image to a place of honour which had been prepared for it by one of their number, perhaps in his own home or in another church. This continued until each member of the confraternity had had his turn of looking after the image. Should one of the brotherhood fall sick, then the other members were expected to pray for his speedy recovery. If this did not work, they took part in his funeral and held a series of memorial services for him. Anybody trying to leave the confraternity was subjected to all pressures, public and private, to induce him to return to the fold. There was a membership of about fifty; the nucleus being made up of monks and priests. With one possible exception nobody of high social standing, not even within the city of Thebes, was included in its numbers. Its function seems to have been purely religious, but it underlines how society in a provincial city revolved around monasteries and churches.

They might even provide some of the amenities of city life. In the early eleventh century a monk was responsible for building a new bridge over the river Eurotas at Lakedaimon. He founded a monastery with its church on the northern end of the bridge as a means of ensuring its upkeep after his death.⁶⁷

III

The appearance of most Byzantine cities in the eleventh and twelfth centuries would have been rather different from that of their forerunners of late antiquity. To the Nicaean Emperor Theodore II Lascaris (1254-1258) the modern buildings at Pergamon appeared like mouseholes beside the ruins of the ancient city.⁶⁸ The Byzantine city was as often as not more of a hilltop town, with an untidy mass of build-

⁶⁶ J. Nesbitt and J. Wiitta, 'A Confraternity of the Comnenian Era', *BZ* 68 (1975) 360-84.

⁶⁷ D.A. Zakythenos, 'Kastron Lakedaimonos', *Hellenica* 15 (1957) 95-101.

⁶⁸ *Theodori Ducae Lascaris Epistolae CCXVII*, ed. N. Festa (Florence 1898), pp. 107-108.

ings dribbling down the slopes of the citadel into the plain below; while the city of late antiquity retained something of the monumentality and regular planning of the classical city, even if its character was changing. As Libanius observed of Antioch at the end of the fourth century, «the houses of individuals grew, but not the city».⁶⁹ The city was losing its sense of cohesion, as power passed from the municipal council into the hands of a collection of big landowners, men with local influence, who usually had the bishop in their pocket. The cathedral ought to have been a focus of the city, but it was often shut away or separated from city life by the wall enclosing its atrium. It was part of the way the city was ceasing to revolve around public spaces, such as the *agora* or even public thoroughfares and buildings and was coming to be organized around private buildings, be they the palaces of the powerful or the monasteries they often became:⁷⁰ all very much features of the Byzantine city.

It is as though a process of evolution was cut short in the seventh century to be taken up again in the tenth, for there are many points of resemblance between the city of late antiquity and its successor of the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Both were dominated by a local land-owning class. Their economy was directed in the first place to the countryside and agricultural products and supplying the needs of the landowners and their households. They were at the same time dependent upon Constantinople and the imperial government. The *archontes*, just like the *potentiores* of late antiquity, enjoyed imperial honours and posts in local government. The most able and ambitious looked to make a career for themselves in Constantinople. The city formed a nodal point in the process of recycling money between the capital and the provinces: money being drawn in the shape of taxation from the provinces and disbursed in the shape of salaries and other forms of imperial largesse, of which the *archontes* and *potentiores* were among the chief beneficiaries.

Because of the loss of Egypt and Syria the Byzantine cities of the eleventh and twelfth centuries probably had a more important role in supplying Constantinople with foodstuffs than had the cities of late an-

⁶⁹ Libanius, *Selected Works*, ed. and transl. A.F. Norman (Cambridge, Mass. 1977) II, p. 444, 11.1-2.

⁷⁰ Cf. G. Dagron, 'Le christianisme dans la ville byzantine', *DOP* 31 (1977) 9-10.

tiquity. By the eleventh century there were dozens of small ports and market towns. They were thickest on the ground the closer you came to Constantinople. The building up of this network made it possible for the increasing demand for agricultural produce in the capital to be communicated to the producer and for agricultural products to be transmitted to the capital. Such a place was Raideostos on the sea of Marmora. It was a centre of the Thracian corn trade. The corn was brought down in carts and sold on the open market before being shipped to Constantinople.⁷¹

Here we have an example of the way the needs of the capital stimulated the growth of a market economy centred on the provincial cities. The growing influence of the market on the shape of the Byzantine city distinguished it from its forerunner of late antiquity. In general terms the former showed greater potential than the latter for independence both politically and economically from the capital. The Byzantine city showed a greater awareness of its own interests, which at some point in the eleventh century came to be seen as of greater moment than respect for imperial authority. The first steps in this direction came with the appearance in one or two cities of a *dynastes*, as he was called. He was the lord of the city. His power was entirely informal and rested in the end on his ability to further the interests of the city. One of the earliest examples was a certain Noah, who became *dynastes* of the Thessalian port of Demetrias around the middle of the eleventh century. It was his business acumen which recommended him to the citizens of the place.⁷² In some cases, the *dynastes* was only a reluctant defender of local interests. The citizens of Larissa in Thessaly were outraged when Constantine X Doukas (1059-1067) imposed heavier taxes. They induced Nikoulitzas Delphinas, the head of its chief family, against his better judgement to lead a rebellion.⁷³

It was a failure, but it is nevertheless interesting. The term used for the citizens of Larissa was *synkastritai*, which suggests a growing sense of community within the city. It was also one of the first rebellion to be centred on a city rather than on a theme. It ushered in an epoch of rebellions. Most of these were centred on cities, very few on themes.

⁷¹ Michael Attalciates, pp. 201-202.

⁷² *Ceccaumeni Strategikon*, ed. B. Wassiliewsky and V. Jernstedt (St Petersburg 1896) p. 34, 11. 12-16.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, pp. 65-73.

This may be taken as proof of the way in which the focus of provincial life had by the late eleventh century shifted decisively from the theme organization to the cities. Adrianople, the chief city of Thrace, was a constant centre of discontent from the 1040s onwards. It became for a brief period in the late 1070s the capital of a virtually independent state. At its head was Nicephorus Vryennios, the head of the most powerful family of Adrianople, but he relied on the support of the other *archontic* families. To strengthen his position his brother called them together in an assembly, a forerunner of those city assemblies of the final period of Byzantine history.⁷⁴ Faced with opposition from another great family, the Tarchaneiotes, he hastily arranged a marriage uniting the two families.⁷⁵ Such family connections had an important role to play. When Vryennios rebelled in 1077 the city of Raides-tos was raised on his behalf by the wife of a member of the Vatatzes family, which was closely related to the Vryennioi.⁷⁶

Much the same pattern is evident in Anatolia, where a great many, if not the majority of cities, came under the control of a lord. In the aftermath of the Byzantine defeat at Mantzikert (1071) by the Seljuqs every city needed a protector, even in some cases *faute mieux* a Turkish chieftain, or some foreign adventurer. So the city of Amaseia fell into the hands of the Norman mercenary Russell Balliol. There was considerable local sympathy for him.⁷⁷ He had offered some measure of protection at a time of chaos. The government of Michael VII Doukas (1071-1078) refused to recognize his usurpation of power, but in other cases it was willing to condone the appearance of these lordships. This is what seems to have happened with Theodore Gab-ras, who established himself as lord of Trebizond in 1075,⁷⁸ and is known to have happened with Maurice at Pontic Heracleia, which he dominated from his palace with the help of a military retinue.⁷⁹

Once Alexius I Comnenus had succeeded in restoring central au-

⁷⁴ Nicephorus Vryennios, *Historiarum Libri Quattuor*, ed. and transl. by P. Gautier (Brussels 1975) pp. 223, 11.18-21.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 225, 11.3-7.

⁷⁶ Michael Attaleiates, pp. 248-9.

⁷⁷ Anna Comnena, *The Alexiad*, ed. B. Leib (Paris 1967) I, pp. 13-14.

⁷⁸ A. A. M. Bryer, 'A Byzantine Family: the Gabrades, c. 979-c.1653', *University of Birmingham His-torical Journal* 12 (1971) 175.

⁷⁹ Nicephorus Vryennios, p. 197, 11.19-23.

thority, the *dynastai* fade from the scene, but they reappear again in the late twelfth century when the Byzantine Empire was once again prey to deep political crisis. It might therefore be argued that the appearance of these lords was something quite extraordinary, linked more to political weakness at the centre than any developments of city life. This is to miss the point. Byzantine cities were evolving their own informal organization, which surfaced at times of political crisis in the shape of the *dynastes*. In times of peace there was perhaps less need for a *dynastes*, who would protect a city's interests. Power would again rest with the *archontes*. Both are evidence of a permanent change in the character of the Byzantine city: its increasing autonomy, gained for the most part surreptitiously and not confirmed officially, except in one or two cases, until after 1204.

One of the earliest surviving documents issued to a Byzantine city was the so-called *Pactum Adrianopolitanum* of 1206.⁸⁰ This was an agreement between the city of Adrianople and its new Venetian masters. The Caesar Theodore Branas was confirmed as captain of the city, a post to which he had succeeded. He was to rule according to Greek usage, which suggests that the Venetians were making use of previously existing arrangements. The other main stipulations were that Venetians resident in the city would be fully protected and that the city would provide a force of five hundred cavalry. Branas took an oath to respect this agreement, but so did another Greek magnate acting on behalf of the nobles of the city. The Venetians respected the autonomy of the city, and with it the rights of the *archontes*, but in western terms its functions seem more feudal than urban. The Byzantine city was evolving into a centre of noble privilege and military organization.^{80bis}

Where then did commerce and manufactures fit in to Byzantine city life? Trade in agricultural commodities was always important, but outside the towns and cities of the Greek lands and, of course, Constantinople manufactures and trade in finished goods seem to have been relatively unimportant. It is not easy to decide why manufactures should have taken root in the Greek cities rather than elsewhere in the Byzantine Empire. In western Europe manufactures were at first of real importance only in some of the towns of Flanders and northern

⁸⁰ Tafel and Thomas, II, no. xlix, pp. 17-19.

^{80bis} E. Francès, 'La féodalité et les villes byzantines au XIII^e et au XIV^e siècle', *BS* 16 (1955) 76-96.

Italy. Here the main factors were geography, the supply of raw materials, and the nature of political power. Some of this holds good for the Greek towns and cities: they lay across the main routes linking Byzantium and the western Mediterranean; there were good supplies of wool and, more especially, of raw silk. Perhaps it was these which attracted Jews, fleeing in the early eleventh century from persecution in Fatimid Egypt.⁸¹ They seem to have been the decisive factor, bringing with them their skills in glass making and the manufacture of silks. At first, they were objects of some local suspicion. St Nikon drove out of Lakedaimon a community of Jews, at least some of whom were engaged in the manufacture of cloth, though this did occasion dissatisfaction among a section of the population.⁸² Slowly the Jews were accepted in other Greek cities. From the eleventh century comes the epitaph in Hebrew of a Jewish silk dyer working at Corinth.⁸³ By the mid-twelfth century when Benjamin of Tudela visited Greece there were Jews scattered throughout its towns and cities. There was a community of three hundred at Corinth, two hundred at Euripos, four hundred at Halmyros, and many smaller ones, but by far and away the largest was at Thebes, where there were two thousand Jews, almost exclusively engaged in the manufacture of silk.⁸⁴

By the middle of the twelfth century Thebes may have outstripped Constantinople in silk manufacture. At the very least, its silks were more highly prized for their quality.⁸⁵ The success of silk manufactures at Thebes and to a lesser extent at Corinth may have been responsible for a rough division of labour between the towns and cities of Greece. Athens concentrated on the production of soap and purple dye,⁸⁶ both necessary for the silk industry. Athens, in its turn, apparently lacked

⁸¹ A. Sharf, *Byzantine Jewry from Justinian to the Fourth Crusade* (London 1971) pp. 107-127.

⁸² *Neos Hellenomnemon*, 3 (1906), pp. 165-166.

⁸³ J. Starr, *The Jews in the Byzantine Empire 641-1204* (Athens 1939) p. 148.

⁸⁴ Benjamin of Tudela, pp. 10-11.

⁸⁵ John Tzetzes, *Epistulae*, ed. P.M. Leone (Leipzig 1972) no. 71, pp. 101-3; Nicetas Choniates, *Historia*, ed. A. Van Dieten (Berlin/New York 1975) p. 461, 11.35-36; Michael Choniates, *Ta Sozomena*, ed. Sp. P. Lampros (Athens 1879) II, p. 83, 11.18-21.

⁸⁶ Michael Choniates, II, p. 137, 1.2, p. 275, 1.10. Cf. K.M. Setton, 'Athens in the later 12th century', *Speculum* 19 (1944) 179-207.

smiths. Its archbishop complained: «the bellows have failed us; there is no worker in iron among us, no worker in brass, no maker of knives». So he turned for help to the bishop of the small town of Gardiki, which was renowned for the manufacture of agricultural implements and carts.⁸⁷

Archaeology reveals that Corinth was a centre of glass making and pottery and exported some of its wares. The discovery of a glass workshop provides a glimpse of how such manufactures were organized. It was of modest size, comprising a shopfront looking out on the market place and a furnace at the back. These premises doubled as the living quarters of the craftsman and his family. This pattern is repeated in some potters' workshops which have also been found close to the centre of Byzantine Corinth. The layout of these workshops suggests both the humble status of the craftsman and the rudimentary organization of industry, where the producer was still selling directly to the customer.⁸⁸

It is unlikely that silk manufacture was organized in this fashion. The numerous stages of production needed would have precluded it. In Constantinople silk-making was divided between a series of guilds, but no provincial cities, with the possible exception of Thessalonica, possessed any such organization. There are no signs that the growth of manufactures threw up a class of entrepreneurs; only that landowning families resident in a city rented out the workshops⁸⁹ and in this way benefitted from the trade and manufactures of their city.

IV

The origins of the silk industry in Greece can be traced back perhaps as early as the tenth century,⁹⁰ but it was not until the middle of the twelfth century that there is clear evidence that it was of more than

⁸⁷ Michael Choniates, II, p. 12, 11.20-22, p. 69, 11.7-15.

⁸⁸ G.R. Davidson, 'A Mediaeval Glass Factory at Corinth', *American Journal of Archaeology* 44 (1940) 297-324. Cf. Kazhdan, *Derevna i gorod*, pp. 311-312.

⁸⁹ *Actes de Lavra*, I, no. 59, 11.7-8, p. 308, 11.12-13.

⁹⁰ Cf. Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *De Administrando Imperio*, I, p. 256, 1.11.

local importance. This coincides with Italian, and particularly Venetian, penetration of the Byzantine market. Are the two linked? It would be a gratifyingly simple solution: the presence of Italian merchants stimulating the nascent manufactures of the towns and cities of Greece. The Venetians displayed an early interest in the trade of Thebes. In 1072 two Venetian partners put up 75 l. for a venture to Thebes and in the next year two more Venetian merchants put up 300 l. to the same end.⁹¹ These were very considerable sums at a time when Venetian merchants still found it difficult to raise cash. What these merchants traded in is not recorded. Silk is only a guess, but a reasonable one: it is difficult at this time to see what else would have attracted them inland to Thebes. Surprisingly, it was to be nearly a century before the Venetians again showed an interest in the wares of Thebes. They preferred to work from Corinth,⁹² which to a seafaring people had obvious advantages over bucolic Thebes. It is more than likely that the Venetians did some business in the finished goods they found on the market at Corinth, but their main interest was in the agricultural products of Greece. In other words, there are no very good grounds for supposing that the success of silk manufactures or, indeed, any other manufactures in the Greek cities was directly connected with the Venetians' penetration of the Byzantine market.

The success of the Venetians in the trade of the Byzantine Empire rested very heavily on the privileges they received in 1082 from the Emperor Alexius I Comnenus. Far and away the most valuable concession was exemption from the 10% customs duty, which all traders, Byzantine and foreign, normally had to pay. This gave them a real edge over any competitors, perhaps less so with luxury goods, such as silks, which were relatively light and very costly, but very much so with bulk goods, such as corn and olive oil, where transport costs were high and ship the only practical means of freightage over long distances. Some of the agricultural produce handled by the Venetians found its way to Italy and even Egypt, but the bulk went to Constantinople. Before the twelfth century it had drawn most of its supplies from its im-

⁹¹ R. Morozzo della Rocca and A. Lombardo, *Documenti del commercio veneziano nei secoli XI-XIII* (Turin 1940) I, nos. xii-xiii, pp. 11-13.

⁹² *Ibid.*, nos. xviii, xx, xxv, xxxv, liv, lxvii, lxviii, lxix, lxxii, lxxx, lxxxxviii, xciv, xcvi, xc, xclvi, clxxxv, cxcii, ccxxxii, ccxxxvi.

⁹³ Tafel and Thomas, I, no. xxxiii, pp. 51-54.

mediate hinterland. Only in times of scarcity did the government feel the need to import corn from the Greek lands,⁹⁴ but in the twelfth century they became one of the capital's main suppliers. The presence of Venetian merchants in the towns and cities of Greece is therefore more likely to have stimulated the agriculture of the region rather than its manufactures. Common sense suggests that the *archontes* would have been the main beneficiaries, since they controlled most of the land within easy reach of the cities. But the contents of a document of 1151 still come as a surprise: they show a group of Venetian merchants buying olive oil directly from the *archontes* of Sparta.⁹⁵

By the middle of the twelfth century the Venetians had begun to establish permanent settlements in the towns and cities of Greece. These grew up around monasteries which they acquired. They acted as depositories for the documents and valuables of the Venetian community; they kept the weights and measures which the Venetians were duty bound to employ in their various transactions. The priests attached to them would double as notaries and thus perform an indispensable service to the Venetian community. Venetian monasteries and churches are attested in the twelfth century at Dyrrachion,⁹⁶ Lemnos,⁹⁷ Adrianople,⁹⁸ Raideostos,⁹⁹ Halmyros,¹⁰⁰ Corinth,¹⁰¹ Thebes,¹⁰² and Lakedaimon.¹⁰³ The houses, hostels, and workshops of the Venetian community clustered around them. This was the usual pattern within Byzantine cities: for quarters to grow around monasteries and churches. The Venetians remained foreigners. Their success, their privileged status, their religion would soon make them the targets of popular resentment. The decision taken in 1171 by the Emperor Manuel I Comnenus to seize all Venetians resident in the Byzantine Em-

⁹⁴ E.g. in 1036: John Skylitzes, *Synopsis Historiarum*, ed. I. Thurn (Berlin/New York 1973) p. 400.

⁹⁵ A. Lombardo and R. Morozzo della Rocca, *Nuovi Documenti del commercio veneto dei secoli XI-XIII* (Venice 1953) no. XI, p. 14.

⁹⁶ Tafel and Thomas, I, p. 52.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 98-101.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 137-139.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 103-105.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 136-137.

¹⁰¹ Morozzo della Rocca and Lombardo, no. lxxxviii.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, no. cxxxvii.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, no. ccv.

pire and their property must at first have had general approval.^{103bis} But it must soon have become apparent that the prosperity of the Greek towns and cities depended upon their presence. The essential role they played is suggested by the ease with which they recovered their former position after their official return to the Byzantine Empire in 1184.¹⁰⁴ Even before this in the mid-1170s there were Venetians operating unofficially at Thebes, which suggests that they must have had some local protection.¹⁰⁵

If in the short term the presence of Venetians in the towns and cities of Greece was beneficial, in the long term it would prove a mixed blessing. The economic dominance of the Venetians left them increasingly vulnerable to the penetration of western manufactures. The eclipse of Byzantium as a centre of manufactures may not have occurred until the thirteenth century, but the conditions that made this possible were already being created in the twelfth century. Still more insidious was the way Venetian commercial success altered the relationship between the provincial cities and the capital. As we have seen, this had evolved within a framework provided by the imperial system of government. Purely economic ties were only of secondary importance. The growth of a market economy dominated by the Venetians was to reverse this. Never had the economic links joining Constantinople and its provincial towns and cities been closer than in the twelfth century, but the state stood to gain very little. The twelfth century saw a rapid growth of the market as the dominant feature of the Byzantine economy at the expense of state control over the economy. This placed a severe strain on a system of government where government and economy had been difficult to separate. The sorry state of administration in Greece after 1180 is witness to the way Byzantine government was beginning to break down under the pressure.¹⁰⁶

The character of urban life cannot fail to be connected with the nature of the economy. A change from an economy where the state was the most powerful force to one where the market was must surely have

^{103bis} Tafel and Thomas, I, p. 129, 11.3-4.

¹⁰⁴ F. Thiriet, *La Romanie vénitienne au moyen âge* (Paris 1959) pp. 49-63.

¹⁰⁵ Morozzo della Rocca and Lombardo, nos. cclxxiii-v.

¹⁰⁶ J. Herrin, 'Realities of Byzantine Provincial Government: Hellas and Peloponnesos, 1180-1205', *DOP* 29 (1975) 252-285.

been clearly reflected in the cities of Byzantine Greece. It was not; only a potential for change which was never realized, because of the success of the Italians. The Venetians, in particular, because they were exempted from the payment of customs duties, were in an excellent position to exploit the possibilities created by the growth of a market economy and in the process to extend its range. Byzantium was at first a place to make money and then the perfect export market for western manufactures.¹⁰⁷ The Venetians would use the Byzantine cities to acquire raw materials and sell finished goods. Byzantine landowners profitted and a small native business class thrived on the coat tails of these foreign merchants, but city life stagnated.

V

The towns and cities of the Byzantine Empire grew up as a network around Constantinople, designed to serve the needs of the capital and the imperial system of government. Changes occurring within Constantinople must therefore have had just as much influence in the shaping of the Byzantine city as any local changes of foreign intervention. So much of the economic activity of the Byzantine Empire was concentrated in Constantinople. This facilitated a large measure of state control. There could be little significant advance of a market economy until state controls over economic activity in Constantinople were dismantled.

The imperial workshops within the precincts of the palace made the state the major manufacturer, but for state control over economic activity generally the guilds were much more important. They were private bodies which came under state supervision; «they were permitted in the imitation of a *polis* to have a common activity, treasury, and a syndic with the help of whom they carry out their common purpose» (*Basilics*, VIII, 2. 101). The regulations governing a number of the most important trades and professions at Constantinople are preserved in the Book of the Prefect, which was compiled at the beginning

¹⁰⁷ Cf. S. Borsari, 'Il commercio veneziano nell'Impero bizantino nel XII secolo', *Rivista Storica Italiana* 76 (1964) 982-1011; *id.*, 'Per la storia del commercio veneziano col mondo bizantino nel XII secolo', *ibid.* 88 (1976) 104-126.

of the tenth century by the Emperor Leo VI (882-912).¹⁰⁸ By no means all trades and professions were included. Those that were owed their inclusion to a variety of factors: inertia, tradition, but also political necessity. The imperial government needed a capital which did not run out of control. Political stability required that Constantinople was well-supplied. The retail and provisioning trades are almost without exception included in the Book of the Prefect. The most valuable finished goods Constantinople had to offer were its silks, which were prized the world over. The various silk guilds are therefore included. There were also regulations for the bankers, the silversmiths, and the notaries, through whose hands much of the business of Constantinople went. One of the underlying aims reflected in the Book of the Prefect was to secure for the capital a stable economy and society. This was to be achieved by way of price controls, fixed profit margins, and limitations on competition, applied not directly by the government, but by private associations. These in return enjoyed monopoly rights.

This may have worked well enough in the early tenth century, when the economy of Constantinople was still fairly rudimentary. The limited extent of economic activity at this time is betrayed by a detail of the Book of the Prefect. The imperial government fixed the total number of notaries who could work in the capital at a mere twenty four.¹⁰⁹ This ruling was regarded very seriously: any Prefect of the City found increasing the number of notaries would be stripped of his office and dignity. When one thinks of the hundreds of notaries operating in the Italian cities in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, it is immediately apparent how this lack of notaries at Constantinople must have restricted business; and it is not as though each notary was at the head of a big firm. The law only allowed him to employ a single clerk.

Professor Lopez¹¹⁰ has detected signs in the Book of the Prefect itself of the stress imposed on the silk industry by these regulations. Restrictions meant that the guilds could not meet the growing demand for Byzantine silks. It had in the end to be met by those working outside the guild framework, whether in the capital or in the provinces.

¹⁰⁸ To Eparkhikon Biblion, *The Book of the Eparch, Le livre du Prefet*, introd. by I. Dujcev (London 1970).

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 20-21.

¹¹⁰ R. S. Lopez, 'Silk Industry in the Byzantine Empire', *Speculum* 20 (1945) 17-20.

This failure of the guilds boosted the 'unofficial' economy, in other words, those economic activities which lay outside the regulations of the Book of the Prefect. Here there were fewer controls and greater possibilities for the growth of a market economy. Those involved were very often the poor, the outcasts, engaged in menial tasks. They worked very much in the shadow of the state regulated sector of the economy.

From the end of the tenth century their activities were increasingly favoured by the difficulties the guilds had in meeting new demands. These were the result of a combination of factors: relative peace, influx of booty, a growing population, and foreign demand for the silks and other luxury goods, for which Constantinople was famed. The specific areas of the 'unofficial' economy which can be shown to have benefitted were the importing of foodstuffs into the capital, the cheap end of the silk industry, and shipbuilding, but it was probably more far-reaching than this. There were fortunes to be made by the enterprising and their success was sufficiently marked by the mid-eleventh century for it to bring down on these nouveaux-riches the scorn of the intellectual elite of Constantinople.¹¹¹

One of these was the father of the Emperor Michael V (1041-42). He was a caulker, working in shipyards near Constantinople.¹¹² His success tells us something about the fortunes of the city of Constantinople in the early eleventh century. Caulking became an even more essential part of shipbuilding at Byzantium as a result of the introduction of new methods of construction. The expensive and time-consuming mortice and tenon shell construction favoured by the Romans was abandoned. In its place, perhaps because of contact with the Russians, Byzantine shipwrights preferred frame construction, but instead of cladding the frame with overlapping planks clinkerwise, they built in carvel fashion, in other words the planks were set flush. Caulking was essential if the vessel was to remain watertight. Compared with previous methods of construction this was relatively quick and cheap and suggests a greater demand for shipping. A wreck of this type of ship has recently been discovered, dating from c. 1020. It was quite small measuring some seventeen metres along the gunwhale. It was engaged

¹¹¹ E.g. *Die Gedichte des Christophoros Mitylenaios* (Leipzig 1903) nos. 63, 134.

¹¹² Michael Psellus, *Chronographia*, ed. E. Renauld (Paris 1926) I, p. 69, xxvi.

in coastal trade along the shores of western Asia Minor.¹¹³

The success of this method of construction fits into a pattern of growth in local trade, which was most marked around the shores of the sea of Marmora. It was perhaps the main foundation of the market economy which developed in Constantinople, however inconspicuously at first. By the 1070s its importance is apparent from the way it became the target of the chief minister, Nikephoritzes. He was trying to bring the Empire through the crisis which had developed in the aftermath of the disaster at Mantzikert (1071). Part of his recipe was recovery of control over the economy of the capital. He brought the ports around Constantinople back under state control.¹¹⁴ The free corn market of Raideustos was subjected to government regulations. Imperial officials intervened to fix the price of corn with disastrous results. Corn disappeared from the market, the price climbed higher with adverse effects on other prices and the level of wages.¹¹⁵ We owe these pertinent observations to the historian Michael Attaleiates, who owned property in Raideustos. They are probably the first remarks ever devoted to the effect of state interference on the workings of a market economy and provide a commentary on the latter's advance in eleventh-century Byzantium. They also reveal that one prominent in government circles favoured a free economy over a controlled one.

Nikephoritzes's experiment soon came to an end. In 1077 the people of Raideustos rose in revolt and burnt down the government granaries. The capital suffered famine and plague. The next year Nikephoritzes was overthrown. His failure initiated the gradual dismantling of most state controls over the economy of the capital. The guilds fade from the scene in the course of Alexius I Comnenus's reign (1081-1118).¹¹⁶ This does not mean that at some point they were officially wound up. Professional and trade associations, in other words, guilds, continued to exist and the Prefect of the City retained some mea-

¹¹³ G.F. Bass and F.H. Van Doorninck Jr., 'An 11th Century Shipwreck at Serce Liman, Turkey', *The International Journal of Nautical Archaeology and Underwater Exploration* 7 (1978) 119-32. Cf. R.W. Unger, *The Ship in the Medieval Economy* (London 1980) pp. 104-6.

¹¹⁴ Michael Attaleiates, p. 280.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 202-4.

¹¹⁶ Cf. E. Francès, 'La disparition des corporations byzantines', *Actes du XIIe Congrès International d'Etudes byzantines* II, 93-101; Sp. Vryonis, 'Byzantine *demokratia* and the Guilds in the 11th Century', *DOP* 17 (1963) 309-14.

sure of control over their activities. There is even a single tantalizing reference to the continued existence of the Book of the Prefect.¹¹⁷ The change is more that the guilds ceased to dominate the economic life of the capital. They lost their monopoly rights.

They were at a disadvantage in comparison with their competitors. Retailers were still subject to the regulations of the Prefect's office in the mid-twelfth century. The litterateur John Tzetzes devoted a vignette to their unhappy lot. A fishmonger or a greengrocer would buy mackerel or apples at the quay for twelve to the obol and then sell them in the market place at ten to the obol. All too often he would find himself being beaten up by the Prefect's staff for putting up the price of food illegally. Yet he had to haul his wares up to the market place and pay a cut to the prefect and his staff. Against this, rascally monks could go from door to door flogging fruit at outrageous prices, and nobody paid any attention.¹¹⁸

This was not what most weakened the position of the guilds. Much more serious was Alexius I Comnenus's grant to the Venetians of freedom from the payment of customs duties along with property in Constantinople. Alexius could hardly have foreseen the consequences of this action and, at the time, would not have cared. In the past, the activities of foreign merchants had been limited by the power of the guilds. In some cases, they were forced to deal directly with the guilds.^{118bis} At the very least, the guilds were in a position to exercise a large measure of control over the level of prices. From the turn of the eleventh century the Venetians were able to trade outside the guild framework. They were also able to acquire workshops and thus break into manufacturing and retailing, which had been the preserve of the guilds. A market economy dominated by the Venetians advanced at the expense of a controlled economy, organized through the guilds.

Pisans, Genoese, and other Latin merchants shared to a lesser extent in the success of the Venetians and established their own factories in the capital. Colonies of foreign merchants were nothing new at Constantinople. What was new was the degree to which the Italians escaped from imperial control. Manuel I Comnenus (1143-1180) un-

¹¹⁷ J. and P. Zepos, *Jus graecoromanum* (Athens 1931) I, p. 375, 11.14-15.

¹¹⁸ Tzetzes, no. 57, pp. 79-84.

^{118bis} *Book of the Prefect*, p. 40.

derstood the potential dangers, but also appreciated the contribution made by the Italians to the prosperity of the Empire. His solution was the creation of imperial burgesses. They were Latins enjoying commercial privileges, but subjects of the Byzantine emperor. In this way, Manuel Comnenus hoped to be able to exploit the commercial talents of the Latins and to operate more effectively within the developing market economy. It was a brilliant scheme. It seems that he wished to extend it to the Venetians permanently resident in the Empire. This had little appeal to the Venetians and their refusal to comply prompted Manuel's decision to arrest the Venetians throughout his Empire in 1171.¹¹⁹ He may have hoped that the imperial burgesses and native merchants could take the place of the Venetians in the trade of the Empire. He was wrong. It could not do without the Venetians.

The success of the Italians brought down upon them the hatred of the people of Constantinople. The charges of arrogance and sharp practice made against them had some foundation, but it was more that they were the obvious scapegoats for the discontent felt by large sections of the native population.¹²⁰ The presence of Italian merchants, the growth of a market economy ensured that Constantinople had never been more prosperous than it was in the mid-twelfth century, but its wealth was very unevenly distributed. There had always been a gulf between rich and poor, but it was now deeper than ever. A western bishop noted at the time how 'the wealthy overshadow the streets with buildings and leave these dirty, dark places to the poor and the travellers.'¹²¹

As disturbing were the quick fortunes that were to be made. These seemed to threaten the social order; whence the complaints about self-made men riding down the main avenue of the capital distributing gifts, while men of higher birth and infinitely better education were forced to go on foot.¹²² The professional classes hampered by their traditions and residual state controls could only look on enviously.

¹¹⁹ John Cinnamus, *Epitome rerum ab Ioanne et Alexio Comnenis gestarum* (Bonn 1836) pp. 282-3. Cf. W. Heyd, *Histoire du commerce du Levant au moyen âge* (Paris 1936) I, pp. 200-202.

¹²⁰ P. Lamma, 'Venezia nel giudizio delle fonti bizantine dal X al XII secolo', *Rivista Storica Italiana* 74 (1962) 471-9.

¹²¹ Odon of Deuil, *De profectione Ludovici VII in Orientem*, ed. V.G. Berry (New York 1948) p. 65.

¹²² E.g. Theodore Prodromos, *De Manganis*, ed. S. Bernardinello (Padua 1972) p. 33, 11.18-24.

Envy and social flux contributed to the growing disorder which reigned in the capital. There was less respect for the great. The tradespeople jeered at the Seljuq sultan and his entourage in 1167, when they passed through the forum of Constantine on a state visit.¹²³ The historian Nicetas Choniates attributed the unruliness of Constantinople to its cosmopolitan character and the variety of trades that were carried on.¹²⁴ He was mistaking the symptoms for the causes. Constantinople was certainly a cosmopolitan place in the twelfth century. To carry on business it was necessary to have a smattering of half a dozen languages.¹²⁵ Its trade and manufactures were booming, thanks to the rapid advance made by a market economy. The guilds were eclipsed. They had imparted some measure of stability to Constantinopolitan society. This was lost with their passing; whence the near anarchy which reigned in the capital after the death of Manuel Comnenus in 1180.

Popular resentment against the Latins resident in Constantinople grew. It boiled over during the coup of 1182 which brought Andronicus Comnenus, a cousin of the late emperor, to power. To win the support of the people of the capital he condoned a massacre of the Latins,¹²⁶ who may have numbered as many as 20,000. He was to learn how fickle the loyalties of the mob were. Within three years they had brought about his downfall. After being tortured this darling of the people was led through the market place, where the sausage makers, tanners, bakers, and wine sellers mocked and stoned him. He was then dragged into the hippodrome and beheaded.¹²⁷

His successors tried to protect themselves by distancing themselves from their capital. They preferred the isolation and comparative safety of the Blachernai on the edge of the city to the Great Palace, which lay at the heart of the capital.^{127bis} Many of the traditional ceremonies were abandoned. In 1202 the Emperor Alexius III Angelus (1195-1203) married off his two daughters, but he dispensed with the

¹²³ Nicetas Choniates, p. 120, 11.83-89.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 233-34.

¹²⁵ John Tzetzes, *Historiarum Variarum Chiliades*, ed. Th. Kiessling (Leipzig 1826) p. 496 (= XIII, ll. 360-369).

¹²⁶ Nicetas Choniates, pp. 250-1.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 349-50.

^{127bis} Cf. P. Magdalino, 'Manuel Komnenos and the Great Palace', *BMGS* 4 (1978) 101-14.

customary ceremonial, which took place in the hippodrome and the Great Palace. Instead, a travesty was concocted in a special theatre constructed at the Blachernai. The Prefect of the City mounted on a gorgeously caparisoned cock-horse acted as master of ceremonies. The main event was a footrace between the noblest-born youths of the court. The spectacle was watched by the emperor and his court. All others were excluded.¹²⁸ Faced with the anarchy of his capital the emperor preferred to retreat into his own small circle of relatives and courtiers. It was little wonder that when the soldiers of the fourth crusade appeared in 1203 before the walls of Constantinople Alexis had neither the will nor the strength to put up any effective resistance. The Empire was in the process of collapsing from within.

The Byzantine Empire failed to solve the problems produced by the advance of a market economy. Its institutions, its whole political philosophy, assumed that economic activity was not an end in itself, but was tied to status and ultimately controlled by the state.¹²⁹ Some efforts were made to adapt to the conditions created by the growth of a market economy, but these were not accompanied by any radical changes in underlying assumptions, and only produced bitterness. Any hope of success disappeared with increasing foreign penetration of the Byzantine market. The results were disastrous: imperial authority was discredited and increasingly isolated; the people in both the capital and the provinces were alienated,¹³⁰ while economic power passed into the hands of the Italians, who knew how to exploit the opportunities created by the growth of a market economy. These combined to make it almost impossible for the imperial government to control the network of towns and cities which had grown up around Constantinople. They looked rather to their own interests and sought their own protectors, but their dependence upon the presence of Italians made them vulnerable. It is little wonder that so many towns and cities of Greece, Thrace, and Macedonia hurried to come to terms with the Venetians and the soldiers of the fourth crusade.

The result was the extreme political fragmentation characteristic of the Byzantine world after 1204. Provincial cities now became capi-

¹²⁸ Nicetas Choniates, pp. 508-9.

¹²⁹ Cf. K. Polanyi, *Primitive, Archaic, and Modern Economies* (Boston 1969) esp. pp. 78-115: 'Aristotle discovers the Economy'.

¹³⁰ H. Ahrweiler, *L'idéologie politique de l'Empire byzantin* (Paris 1975) pp. 100-102.

tals of petty states. At one time or another, Thessalonica, Trebizond, Nicaea, Arta, Adrianople, Mistra, Thebes, Joannina, and even Trikala all had their princely or imperial courts. Many other towns and cities were granted privileges, which gave them a large measure of autonomy. In its last phase the Byzantine Empire resembled nothing so much as a loose confederation of city states. This may give the impression that they were places of importance, but they were not centres of manufactures and their trade was largely in the hands of the Italians. They were essentially centres of consumption, communities of landowners grouped around their bishop, anxious to safeguard their estates and with some responsibility for local defence.¹³¹ They took great care to establish the exact conditions governing their military duties. The essence of the late Byzantine city is well caught in the description that the Emperor John Cantacuzenus (1347-54) has given us of Servia, a town dominating the main route northwards out of Thessaly.¹³²

«This city lies on a precipitous spur of a mountain, but in such a way that it appears to the passer-by to be higher than it actually is. The city climbs right to the summit and is divided by three ramparts so that from the outside it looks as though three cities have been superimposed one on top of another. On both sides it is surrounded by deep gorges. As much of the area between the city, the plain, and the gorges, as is suitable for habitation, is covered with dwellings, not only of the common people, but also of the well-to-do citizens and the soldiers, who are local men and honest. Because of the lie of the land, the houses in the city itself appear to rise up on top of one another. There are not many houses of more than a single storey. The two lower parts of the city are inhabited by citizens, while the third, being the citadel, belongs to the governor. It is difficult of access from every side and cannot be put under siege very easily».

The character which the Byzantine town clearly assumed after 1204 had been foreshadowed by developments of the twelfth century, which destroyed any possibility that the towns of Byzantium might follow the pattern of some northern Italian towns and become primarily

¹³¹ Cf. E. Werner, 'Vizantijskij gorod v epokhu feodalizma: tipologija i spetsifika', *VV* 37 (1976) 8-12.

¹³² John Cantacuzenus, *Historiarum Libri IV* (Bonn 1832) III, pp. 130-131.

centres of manufacturing and commerce. This only happened where a market economy emerged more or less independent of social and administrative imperatives. The eleventh century saw in Constantinople and in some of the Greek towns the beginnings of a market economy, which went largely unnoticed at first because it was in the hands of the poor, outcasts, and foreigners. Their opportunity came at a time of economic expansion, for which the official sector of the economy was quite unprepared. This was the cause of change and social upheaval, but there were some signs that the Byzantine economy was capable of regulating itself. This depended upon the ability of the state to absorb the growing market economy. This was most clearly done by drawing the new rich into the orbit of the imperial court.¹³³

Any hope that the Byzantine economy would regain its equilibrium was dashed by the privileged position won by the Venetians and other Italians. Alexius I Comnenus thus created the conditions which would allow them not only to control the already existing market sector of the economy, but to extend its scope markedly. The initial effects may have appeared beneficial, but well before the end of the twelfth century, it was clear how much harm the Italian commercial dominance was doing to the well-being of Byzantine towns and cities. Their manufacturing and commercial potential was drained except in so far that they provided markets for the Italians to exploit. As so often in the later history of the Byzantine Empire, so here any changes that came about are far less important than the changes which failed to materialize.

¹³³ Michael Psellus, II, p. 145; xv; Constantine Manasses, *Compendium Chronicum* (Bonn 1837) p. 285, ll. 6705-6714.

MATRONS AND BRIDES OF FOURTEENTH CENTURY BYZANTIUM

JOSEPH GILL

In Byzantium, as elsewhere in the world of the fourteenth century, the place of the woman was in the house. There she bred a family and spent her days in caring for her husband and her children exercising the domestic virtues, busy in a hundred tasks. In polite society of all ranks «no respectable woman ever appeared in the street unveiled; and even in her house she never dined with a stranger, or entered his presence except silently and with downcast eyes». So wrote R.J.H. Jenkins with reference to the eleventh century. Custom had not changed when Francesco Filelfo, the Italian humanist, in the fifteenth century and almost on the eve of the Fall of Constantinople, married in that city the daughter of his Greek professor, John Chrysoloras. Writing about the perfection of Greek pronunciation, he declared: «Ladies of good family retain an unadulterated and pure Greek tongue uncontaminated because they have no communication at all with foreigners. But why do I say 'with foreigners' since such women are never given an opportunity of conversing even with their own fellow-citizens, since they never leave the house except at night, and that very rarely, on horseback, with their faces veiled, and accompanied by servants and members of their own family, to visit a church or to call on very close blood-relations». ¹ Whereas boys, even those with no great social background, could have years of schooling; what education a girl

¹ R.J.H. Jenkins, 'Social Life in the Byzantine Empire', in: *Cambridge Medieval History*, vol. IV, pt. II (Cambridge 1967) pp. 88-9. F. Filelfo, quoted by Sp. Moraitis, 'Sur un passage de Chalcocondyle relatif aux anglais', in *Rev. Et. Grecques* I (1888) p. 97. The same author mentions also Doucas apropos of conditions after the Fall of Constantinople: 'Youths in their prime chained alongside of maidens, maidens whom the sun used not to see, maidens of whom their fathers scarce ever caught a glimpse' (*Hist. Byz.*, ed. I. Bekker [CSHB, Bonn 1834]) p. 291.

got in her youth was what her parents gave her in the home, which was usually very little. Their primary aim was to get her suitably married, and the chief aids to that were a good dowry and an attractive appearance. Real beauty could take her very high indeed up the ladder of social progress, even as far as the imperial throne. The famous law-giver Justinian I became enamoured of and married a pretty dancing girl of doubtful morals, whose courage later saved him his throne. Empress Eirene who married the iconoclast Emperor Leo IV (775-780) was a poor Athenian orphan. After her husband's early death she completely reversed his policies through the Seventh General Council that gave synodal approval to the veneration of images. But she became avid for power and to keep it had her son blinded.²

Histories like these (and there are others equally colourful) make it obvious that empresses were not subjected to the strict limitations that custom put on the lives of the generality of Byzantine women. An empress was crowned and her crowning was a conferring of real powers which, if she were widowed, entitled her to assume the regency if the heir was a minor. «The right of an empress to exercise power or to transmit it to a second husband was never questioned».³

In Byzantium the heir to the throne, to perpetuate his dynasty in that age of recurrent epidemics and premature deaths, married young in the hope that his bride would soon bear him a son and heir. Female children were useful especially in the later years of the Byzantine Empire also to cement friendships or to moderate enmities, and they were rarely wasted. It was not allowed to affiance children before they were seven years old, and the ages for marriage were twelve years for girls and fourteen for boys.⁴ Usually princes and princesses were paired off by their parents while they were still young, but sometimes when there was great diplomatic or political urgency an unfortunate girl would be betrothed and married to a fully grown man. The middle-aged usurper Andronicus I Comnenus in 1183 murdered the young boy-emperor

² A full account of these and other like characters is given in C. Diehl, *Figures byzantines*, vol. I (Paris 1917).

³ L. Bréhier, *Le Monde Byzantin II* (Paris 1949) p. 29.

⁴ Leo the Philosopher, *Constitutio* 109, PC 197, c.639

Alexius II aged thirteen, and then to give legality to his usurpation married the boy's widow Agnes-Anna, an eleven-year old French princess. Two years later Andronicus himself was murdered and Agnes-Anna aged thirteen was a widow for the second time.

A century and a half later (1299), Andronicus II Palaeologus, a mild and scrupulously religious man, when faced with imminent danger from the king of Serbia, a man whom he himself (according to the historian Pachymeres) looked upon as «completely barbarous and altogether revolting, whose kingdom had no culture whatever»,⁵ tried to persuade his sister, already twice a widow, to marry him. When she flatly refused, he gave his little daughter Simonis in her fifth year to the forty-year old savage who had been married already three times before. Even in a society used to child-unions such a marriage was inhuman, and the Patriarch of Constantinople protested vigorously. Andronicus defended his action by reasons of state - there was no other way of preventing the incessant raids from Serbia into Greek Macedonia with all the consequent loss of life and property, the insecurity and misery of the population, than a royal marriage.⁶

So poor Simonis was betrothed to King Stephen Milutin and delivered to him to be brought up at his court till she was of marriageable age. The sequel is recorded by the historian Gregoras: «The King, more than forty years old, had intercourse with Simonis when she was eight years old and damaged her body to such a degree as to render her incapable of childbearing».⁷ In Serbia she was always miserable. At her mother's death in 1317 she returned to Constantinople to participate in the obsequies, but she was so loath to return to the barbarities of Serbia that she lingered on in Constantinople till her husband threatened to fetch her by force. So she was hurriedly sent on her way by the Emperor her father, but such was her abhorrence of the pros-

⁵ Georgii Pachymeris, *De Michaelē et Andronico Palaeologis*, II, ed. E. Bekker (Bonn 1835) p. 293. However, Theodore Metochites who was in Serbia on a diplomatic mission in 1298 dilated in his report on the luxury of its court: cf. D.M. Nicol. *The Last Centuries of Byzantium 1261-1453* (London 1972) p. 125.

⁶ Pachymeres, *Op. cit.*, pp. 293-4

⁷ Nicephorus Gregoras, *Byzantina Historia*, I, ed. L. Schopen (Bonn 1829) p. 243 (Hereafter cited as *Greg.*)

pect before her that, when on her journey she reached Serres, she gave the slip to her escort and donned the religious habit of a nun in a convent. Before news of this event could reach the King, her half-brother snatched her from the convent, tore the religious habit from her shoulders, clothed her again in her regal garments and delivered her to the Serbian escort. She was then twenty-three years old. Her husband died in 1321, and she returned to Byzantium.

The modern mind recoils with horror at merely hearing of such a marriage and imagines that the child's mother must have used every means in her power to prevent it. But, no! Just the opposite. As it was a royal marriage, she approved it. She was Yolanda of Montferrat (in Italy), renamed Eirene at her marriage in 1284 with Emperor Andronicus II when she was eleven years old and he twenty-four or -five. Andronicus had married before and that marriage gave him two sons, Michael and Constantine. Eirene bore him three sons, John (1288), Theodore (1291) and Demetrius (1292) and the one daughter Simonis (1294). Eirene was very ambitious for her children and jealous of the sons of the previous marriage, for, as was natural, they were first in line for the throne. Indeed, Michael had been proclaimed co-Emperor when he was only five years old, but he was not crowned till 1294 when he was seventeen. At the same time Constantine, the second son of the first marriage, and Eirene's eldest son John were given the title of Despot.

That was not good enough for Eirene. «Andronicus's wife Eirene was by nature ambitious and wanted her sons and their posterity to inherit into the distant future the Empire of the Romans», records Gregoras. «She wanted (Gregoras continues) to establish them all as Emperors, second indeed in dignity to the senior Emperor, but no one of them subject to another».⁸ The historian who wrote the above continues that Eirene pestered her husband night and day, in season and out of season, to agree, but he resolutely refused, with the result that there was a permanent state of tension and bickering in the imperial palace and indeed of positive vituperation, till Eirene went off in high dudgeon to take up residence in Thessalonica. From there she tried to

* *Greg.*, p. 234.

arrange the marriage of her eldest son to Isabella of Villehardouin, heir to the Latin principedom of Achaia and no friend of Constantinople, but the Emperor stepped in and had him marry the daughter of his chief minister. She was negotiating the marriage of Theodore, the second son, with a daughter of the ruling family, again Latin, of Athens, so that with the help of Athens and of her son-in-law Stephen Milutin she might conquer Epirus and Thessaly and give them as a compact kingdom to Theodore. Before, however, this plan was mature, her brother, John of Montferrat, died and left her his estates in Piedmont. She made them over to Theodore who with a large sum of Byzantine money left Byzantium, married a Genoese bride and settled in Italy. To place Demetrius, the youngest, she persuaded the king of Serbia, Milutin, to make him his heir. As a result the Serbian nobility revolted and was put down only because Eirene gave the king money to raise an army. Demetrius with a rich retinue went to Serbia but found it too crude for him, and he was soon back with his mother. That only embittered Eirene the more. Her hatred of her husband knew no bounds. She never returned to Constantinople and died, a bitter and unsatisfied woman, in 1317.

Andronicus II was hardly free from the annoyance caused by his wife, when he was having friction with his daughter-in-law, Maria, an Armenian princess, whom emperor Michael had married in 1295. Their eldest son was a pleasure-seeking libertine whose servants by a tragic mistake murdered his only brother Manuel. That event broke their father's heart and he died soon afterwards (12 October, 1320). The grandfather threatened to disinherit his grandson, who thereupon with the help of associates of his own age rebelled. Maria then lived in Thessalonica and seems to have sided with her feckless son Andronicus. The old Emperor summoned her to Constantinople and, when to evade his emissaries she sought sanctuary in a church, she was removed by force. Only after three rebellions did young Andronicus gain the throne in 1328. He rewarded various of his helpers and, in particular, he released from prison a certain Syrgiannes, who was a man of uncertain loyalties and restless ambition, but Andronicus very unwisely made him governor of Thessalonica, where Empress Maria, who after her husband's death had become a nun with the name Xene, was living. Andronicus was scarcely on the throne when he fell seriously ill and was thought to be dying. He appointed his young wife

Anna, then with child, to administer the Empire if he died. When, however, he was urged to allot some responsibility to his mother, he refused, replying «Two people cannot rule, especially if they are women».⁹ Xene was furious. She put the blame for her seclusion on John Cantacuzenus, the young Emperor's great friend and confidant, and on his rather formidable mother Theodora. To counter, as she thought, their plan to get the throne for themselves, she made the Thessalonians swear loyalty to herself till her death and, should her son die; recognition of the child in the womb of the Empress.

Also she adopted Syrgiannes, governor of Thessalonica, as her son and heir. Maria-Xene died in 1333. Shortly afterwards Syrgiannes, enriched by Xene's money and sustained by the affection that the Thessalonians preserved for her memory, took up arms, aiming with the help of the Serbs at making himself independent of the central government. The danger to the crown was very real. Andronicus prepared for war and appointed the Patriarch to be his regent in his absence. But a less perilous solution was found. Syrgiannes was disposed of by a hired assassin's dagger.

Empress Eirene and Empress Maria-Xene had given themselves years of unhappiness as they battled for what they thought was the good of their children. Eirene's daughter, it is true, became a queen but she was desperately miserable, and none of her sons achieved eminence. Maria-Xene's fight for the throne for her progeny was unnecessary because her son the Emperor did not die on that occasion and, in fact, his heir, born soon after it, did succeed to the throne, but not without a civil war in which two more valiant women were involved - Anna, the young wife of Emperor Andronicus III, and Theodora, mother of John Cantacuzenus. Theodora was described by her son as «capable in the administration of public affairs and possessed of a more robust intelligence than is natural in a woman».¹⁰ To her the care of Didymoteichus had been entrusted while during the first rebellion Andronicus and Cantacuzenus were away campaigning, and all officials of the city had been submitted to her orders. When in 1322 the second re-

⁹ Joannes Cantacuzenus, *Historiarum Libri IV*, I, ed. L. Schopen (Bonn 1828) p. 395 (Hereafter cited as *Cant.*).

¹⁰ *Cant.*, p. 125.

bellion was apparently doomed to failure for lack of money to pay an army, John and his mother, both extremely rich, between them supplied what was necessary.¹¹ Later, when Andronicus had gained the throne, while the rather feckless Emperor hunted and jousted, Cantacuzenus with his mother at his side administered the Empire and when necessary fought the Emperor's enemies. Cantacuzenus later claimed that more than once Andronicus had urged him to agree to become co-Emperor, but that he had refused. So one can understand Empress Xene's misgivings in his regard, and it would not be surprising if Andronicus's young wife shared them. The test came when on 15 June 1341 Emperor Andronicus III died leaving Anna with four children. The eldest of the three boys and heir to the throne was the nine-year old John Palaeologus.

The happiest thing by far for Byzantium in this crisis of its history would have been for Empress Anna and John Cantacuzenus to have administered the Empire for the minor heir in harmony. But that did not occur. John Cantacuzenus immediately took things over very efficiently and very completely, even the imperial family itself, never for a moment doubting that he would be regent. This bland assumption of government without consultation with her probably roused in Anna some resentment, which became opposition when a crowd of citizens and soldiers gathered before the palace to acclaim Cantacuzenus and would not be pacified till he had gone out to address them. Aged by now about 26, she had been long enough in the East to have learnt something of Byzantine history and to have known that, less than a century before, the Palaeologan family had secured the throne for itself by blinding the nine-year old legitimate heir John Lascaris. She probably was afraid that history might repeat itself. What she did was to claim the regency for herself and to accept the ready support of Patriarch John Calecas and of Grand Admiral Alexius Apocaucus, both of whom owed their exalted positions to Cantacuzenus's protection. Cantacuzenus was ordered to dismiss his army and himself to remain inactive in Didymoteichus.

There are two excellent contemporary accounts of these events. Cantacuzenus himself wrote his *History* to describe them. It is natur-

¹¹ *Cant.*, pp. 137-8; *Greg.*, II p. 581.

ally a defence of his own actions and a condemnation of his enemies, but his references to Empress Anna are always respectful (a prudent thing to do since she ended up on the winning side and he on the losing), and he puts all the blame for the tragedy that ensued on her advisers. Gregoras, the other historian of the time but as pro-Cantacuzene in his account as Cantacuzenus himself, is less circumspect. «It was Anna's jealous and spiteful mentality, which manifestly was more important to her than the welfare of the Romans,¹² that was the root from which the civil war sprang and which continued to consume and to destroy the wealth of the Romans, branding her as the supreme betrayer». However, she should not be blamed too much (continues Gregoras) for, after all, «if she could not discern and distinguish between better and worse, [one should remember that] she was a woman and a foreigner who had been brought up in foreign ways». ¹³ There is no impartial source for the period, still less a Palaeologan one.

Whatever the reasons for what followed, the results were appalling. Cantacuzenus proclaimed himself co-Emperor and for five years there was civil war. One thing was clear from the start. Popular opinion favoured the legitimate line of the Palaeologi and opposed Cantacuzenus, who relied on the rich landowners for support. His mother remained in Constantinople «for the consolation of the Empress». ¹⁴ But when relations between her son in Didymoteichus and the imperial court grew more tense, on 8 October she and other of their kinsfolk were put under house arrest. Soon the vigilance was increased and, when Theodora vigorously rebutted charges of *lèse majesté* alleged against her son, she was removed to a prison in the palace, and her house with its treasures and stores was confiscated. A noblewoman who had all her life lived delicately and luxuriously, in prison during an unusually bitterly cold winter, she was submitted to harsh treatment from rough gaolers, filthy conditions and food she could not stomach. She fell ill and on 6 January 1342 she died. Cantacuzenus relates that

¹² The Byzantine Empire was the continuation of the Roman Empire of Constantine the Great and so the Byzantines looked on themselves as, and called themselves, *Rhomaioi*, that is Romans, dwelling in Romania.

¹³ *Greg.*, II, p. 761.

¹⁴ *Cant.*, II, p. 105: Anna may have regarded her rather as a wardress.

Empress Anna learnt of her condition only when she was near the end; she sent her own physician to tend her, but it was too late.¹⁵

On 5 March 1342 Cantacuzenus finally moved from his base, the town of Didymoteichus, in an abortive attempt to occupy Thessalonica, the second city of the Empire in importance. Before the end of the year he was on the verge of defeat and took refuge in Serbia, appealing to the king for help. But what towns Serbian troops occupied the Serbian king retained for himself, and Cantacuzenus was no nearer success. Then there came to his aid the Turkish Emir of Aydin, Omur, whose base was Smyrna in Asia Minor, in mid-winter 1342-3 with 380 ships and 29,000 men.

In Didymoteichus Cantacuzenus had left in charge behind him his wife Eirene, with their three daughters. Thereupon the town was besieged by Constantinopolitan forces. Eirene resisted for a time and then, in dire straits, she sought help from the Bulgarian Czar, only to find that these new friends were as dangerous as her old enemies. But she valiantly withstood all pressures. Trustworthy communication with her husband was impossible. Rumours were rife, but she could not learn what the situation really was. The town was on the verge of collapse from starvation when Omur's army came to its relief.

This expedition of Omur was the turning-point in Cantacuzenus's fortunes. It was the first of several such incursions, and thenceforward tens of thousands of Turks had free entry into Byzantium, stealing, harrying and enslaving, till the countryside was denuded of men and beasts. Several times Cantacuzenus sent messengers to the capital city proposing peace and threatening on occasion still more devastation if his overture was rejected.¹⁶ Rejected it was. Anna's resources waned. She tried to get help from the West. She pawned the crown jewels in Venice to get money, the sinews of war. It was of no avail. By May 1346 Cantacuzenus felt secure enough of victory to have himself crowned by the Patriarch of Jerusalem in the city of Adrianople. He entered Constantinople by treachery on 2 February 1347, and Anna had to accept peace. John VI Cantacuzenus was crowned again, this time in Constantinople, as senior co-Emperor to rule with the junior co-Emperor

¹⁵ *Cant.*, II, pp. 143, 163-4, 219-222; *Greg.*, II, 617-18.

¹⁶ *Cant.*, II, pp. 395-6.

John V Palaeologus, who, aged sixteen, was married to the youngest of Cantacuzenus's daughters, Helena, aged fourteen. Helena was crowned Empress.

With Helena's marriage to Emperor John V, Cantacuzenus had achieved one of his ambitions - to have Cantacuzene blood flowing in imperial veins. He had two other daughters and he placed them also to his advantage. His eldest daughter Mary was betrothed to the youthful Despot of Epirus. In 1346, to secure a new Turkish ally after his old friend Omur had lost his port of Smyrna and with it his usefulness, he gave his second daughter, Theodora, in marriage to Orchan, Emir of the Osmanli Turks.¹⁷ The marriage of Christian princesses to infidel chieftains was not novel. In the early part of his *History* Cantacuzenus describes a kind of kindergarten for candidates for the harem. «Roman Emperors, realising that they were unable to beat in battle [the savage barbarians on their boundaries], escaped destruction by conciliating them with gifts and courtesies. What particularly rendered them tractable and friendly towards the Romans was their being given wives from among the women of the imperial family... With this in view, maidens of exceptional beauty, not only of the nobility, but also of plebeian origin, were reared in the imperial palace like the princesses and, as need arose, were betrothed to the satraps of the Mongols who, conciliated by such devices and means, over many years made no incursions into Roman territory». ¹⁸ So Theodora entered Orchan's harem and Cantacuzenus gained a useful ally and source of fighters, who (so Gregoras asserts) would have been supplied to Anna, if Cantacuzenus had refused the demand for the hand of his daughter.¹⁹ A year later Theodora was able to spend three days with her family when in February 1347 Orchan met her father at Scutari to congratulate him on his victory in the civil war. Orchan died in 1362, and she returned to Byzantium where she was still living in 1381 when she was involved in the misfortunes of her sister, Empress Helena.

John V Palaeologus likewise married a daughter to a Turk, one of Orchan's younger sons, whom at the Sultan's behest he had rescued

¹⁷ *Cant.*, II, pp. 585-9

¹⁸ *Cant.*, I, p. 188.

¹⁹ *Greg.*, II, p. 763

from captivity. Gregoras described the results in rapturous words: «There was that divine and stupendous miracle, that in the season when over the last many years the cream of the barbarian power living off the lands of the Romans had as good as closed the very gates of the Byzantines so that everything outside the gates was an uninhabited and trackless waste, now by the will of God unexpected and unlooked for freedom suddenly resulted from the capture of Orchan's son, so that in no time that same Thrace, till then uncultivated and teeming with raiders, was tilled and peaceful».²⁰

Young John V Palaeologus had accepted the peace and, indeed, his marriage with Helena because he had to. But inwardly he was determined to vindicate for himself his full right to the throne and to share it with no one. At one point, indeed, to secure help from the Serbian king Palaeologus seemed ready to repudiate his bride of three years' standing in favour of a Serbian marriage.²¹ To stave off such a tragedy, Cantacuzenus, Helena's father, pressed Palaeologus's mother, Empress Anna, to go to Thessalonica to persuade her son to wiser counsels. She succeeded in her mission and remained thereafter in Thessalonica until she died. John V was pacified for the moment by the grant of an appanage, but he did not renounce his ambitions. His father-in-law, John VI Cantacuzenus, even though he was already senior co-Emperor, was, in fact, a less formidable rival than his determined and unsentimental brother-in-law, Matthew, who with his father's connivance meant to get the purple for himself. The result was desultory war between the two younger men. The older Emperor sent his wife Empress Eirene to talk to them both. She managed to calm her son Matthew for a time, but John V courteously but firmly refused to sign any document. The tension continued. The fighting went on. Empress Helena accompanied her husband Palaeologus in his many changes of fortune. She was with him when, temporarily defeated, he had to retire in a kind of exile to the island of Tenedos.

John V, however, knew where his strength lay - in the support of the generality of the people. So on Palm Sunday, 17 March 1353, he showed himself with a small fleet off Constantinople. But Empress

²⁰ *Greg.*, III, pp. 505-508.

²¹ *Greg.*, III, pp. 148-9.

Eirene, in her husband's absence, quickly mounted a defence, rallied the armed forces, and prevented his landing. But a year later in the night of 21/22 November 1354 he arrived again, landed, and stayed. After a short delay his father-in-law realised the futility of resistance. He abdicated and retired into a monastery, and Eirene became the nun Eulogia (10 December 1354). Ex-Emperor John VI, now the monk Joasaph, lived peacefully for three more decades. He died on 15 June 1383. Little is known of the later history of Eulogia. Her name, but falsely, was associated with a plot against the victorious John V, and in December 1357 she with her husband and many others witnessed the forced renunciation by her son Matthew of all claims to the imperial dignity. Another sad day in her life. She died before her husband. Gregoras, the historian, greatly admired her. «Empress Eirene was a woman who had a great gift of judgement and quickness of intelligence; she surpassed other women as much by the width of her knowledge as she did by the balance of her character... Endowed by nature with great sagacity which she had enhanced by use», she was of the greatest help to her husband always but particularly in the most critical period of his career, and her words and her practical assistance lifted the morale of his followers and kept them loyal to him.²²

Helena Cantacuzena, wife of the sole Emperor of Byzantium, John V Palaeologus, shared in the triumphs of her husband, but her joy was tempered by the knowledge that the price of his triumph was the defeat of her parents and of her brother. In the many years of tension and warfare between the families she had always stayed at her husband's side, and she well deserved the encomium that her father wrote of her in his *History*: «For in everything she was prompt to promote her husband's advantage not only in time of war but at all other times too... enduring exile without repining and for love of him ready to undergo every vicissitude for his sake».²³ Her father went on to praise her other qualities, her kindness, her simplicity and her courage in facing with equanimity the ups and downs of life. She had need of all these virtues, for the future still had hard times in store for her.

Her husband John V had, it is true, made himself sole monarch of the Byzantine Empire - what was left of it. The three rebellions insti-

²² *Greg.*, II, p. 625.

²³ *Cant.*, III, pp. 253-4.

gated by his father, the long civil war waged on his behalf and by himself against the Cantacuzeni, the loss of territory to the Serbian King Dušan, and to the Turks who had conquered all Asia Minor and had just occupied Gallipoli (1354) which gave them an open gateway into Europe, had so lessened the population of the Empire, decimated too by the Black Death, so emptied its exchequer and impoverished the people, that it was hardly viable any longer. Add that the commercial powers of Venice and Genoa were engaged in an implacable rivalry as to which of them could most exploit its dwindling resources. The truth was that after a thousand years and more of life the Empire of the Rhomaioi was dying, and Helena had to watch her husband attempt expedient after expedient to revive it, but in vain. To conciliate his northern neighbour he arranged the marriage of his eldest son aged eight to Maria, the nine-year old daughter of the Czar of Bulgaria. He sent an embassy to Serbia, without result. He appealed again and again to popes, but got no effective aid. He went in person to the King of Hungary and on his journey back was refused transit by Bulgaria. He seems to have left the Empress in charge while he was away, for it was she who furnished two galleys and money to his cousin Amadeo of Savoy who secured his return.²⁴ He even went to Rome and made his personal submission to the Latin Church, but it was no use. And so, in 1373, all means of saving the Empire by opposing the Turks having failed, he became a vassal of Sultan Murad, pledged to pay tribute and to assist his liege-lord in war.

There seems to have been something in Palaeologan blood that always issued in discord, and Empress Helena was inevitably involved in the consequences. While John V was on his first expedition with Sultan Murad, their eldest sons combined in rebellion against their fathers. They were both defeated, and Murad decreed as punishment blinding. John had to obey or to defend his refusal by war. His eldest son, therefore, Andronicus IV and his grandson John VII were blinded, but not completely: they never forgave or forgot. At the same time, John V disinherited Andronicus in favour of his second son, Manuel, and imprisoned him. In 1376, however, it suited Genoa to effect the escape of

²⁴ F. Bollati, *Illustrazioni della spedizione in Oriente del Amadeo VI (il Conte Verde)* (Torino 1900) III, pp. 3-4, 18, 89, 90, 91, 227.

Andronicus and to aid him to take Constantinople. It was the turn then of John V and his other sons to be closely confined in the Anemas Tower, where they stayed for some three years. Meantime Andronicus had himself and his son crowned. But in June 1379 the old Emperor, seemingly miraculously, managed to escape. Then with Venetian and Turkish help he evicted Andronicus from Constantinople and proceeded to besiege Galata, where Andronicus had taken refuge with the Genoese. Andronicus was furious at this reversal of fortunes and suspected that it had been his mother who had contrived his father's escape. He forced her, and with her his grandfather Joasaph, his mother's two sisters, Maria and Theodora, and a daughter, to go with him in flight to Galata, and there they were held under close guard in a small house in the heat of summer when a plague was raging and, as the siege went on, with great scarcity of food. They endured this for some two years till peace was patched up between father and son. Only then was Helena released to rejoin her husband. But the peace did not last long. A chronicler noted: «Know that not only were its articles not observed, but the afore-mentioned Emperor Lord Andronicus took a fortress and the Lord Emperor went forth to defend his territory. And he [Andronicus] advanced against his father with his whole force and God preserved the Lord Emperor from the wrath and evil purpose of his son».²⁵ John V nearly lost his life in that fighting, but happily survived to snatch the victory. Andronicus died a few years later.

That, however, was not the end of the feud. It was continued by Andronicus's son John. In 1390 with Turkish and Genoese help he attacked Constantinople, forced an entry and penned his grandfather up in a fortress near the Golden Gate, overlooking a harbour. Continued bombardment failed to destroy the fortress before Manuel Palaeologus at his third attempt managed to enter the harbour and succour the old Emperor. John VII, surprised by a sudden sortie from the fortress, had to evacuate the city in September. Shortly afterwards the old Emperor, John V Palaeologus, died on 16 February 1391, from chagrin that the Turkish Sultan had ordered him to demolish the fortress at the Golden Gate, which he shortly before had strengthened and had so recently valiantly defended: but he dared not disobey.

²⁵ R. -J. Loenertz, 'Fragment d'une lettre de Jean V Paléologue à Gênes', *BZ* 51 (1958) 37-42.

Manuel, then on active service with the Turkish army, without consulting the Sultan hastened to Constantinople to claim the throne. Bayezid, taken by surprise, acquiesced; nevertheless he ordered him to return to the field and, for some months, Helena acted as regent in his stead. Not long afterwards she entered the convent of Kyra Martha, to which in 1354 her mother and in 1359 her sister Maria had gone. She took the name Hypomone, which means Patience. She died in 1396, probably in November.

Empress Helena was a well educated person, efficient, staunch and long-suffering. All her life she was in the midst of wars in which the people whom she most loved were on opposite sides. Her tragic plight is eloquently described by Demetrius Cydonès, the famous *littérateur* of fourteenth century Byzantium and a former teacher of hers, in a long and somewhat rhetorical letter that he addressed to her. The Evil One, he wrote, «roused among close relatives suspicions, envy and discord; he made each one believe that his wellbeing could come only from the ruin of the others; he turned nature against itself and broke the concord of those who used to live in harmony, fomenting among them such quarrels that the names, father, mother, brothers, by which the dearest bonds of blood are designated, came to mean no longer kinship but war and rivalry... As for you, you grieved at the fate of the one party and of the other, and lamented victors and vanquished alike. But they did not believe you... Always trying to come to the aid of the loser, you seemed to those who had carried the day to have no sympathy with them. So, with the fortunes of war inclining now to one side and now to the other, your heart could never be at rest, being unable, since you could not bring them to reconciliation, to know with which party to take your place».²⁶

Poor Helena. No wonder that in the convent she chose to be called Patience. It epitomised her life.

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²⁶ R.-J. Loenertz, *Demetrius Cydonès. Correspondance* (= Studi e Testi 208) (Città del Vaticano 1960) no. 222, esp. p. 105. G. Cammelli, *Demetrius Cydonès. Correspondance* (Budé with French translation of selected letters) (Paris 1930), no. 28, pp. 68-77

The imperial brides of fourteenth century Byzantium had not the dubious glamour of Justinian's Theodora of the Cinderella-like good fortune of Empress Eirene, wife of Leo IV. They were all of princely, or at least noble families. They were not sought out by their future husbands, and their marriages were not the culmination of a romantic courtship. While they were still perhaps interested in dolls and still learning to read they were being disposed of by their elders, bargaining with them as counters for some political advantage. Boys had no more say over their future than had girls. The first stage was the betrothal which for the Christian of that day was a kind of sacrament and imposed a solemn obligation. Frequently the girl was then transferred to the household of her future husband and brought up there till she was old enough to marry, and the marriage took place as soon as it legitimately could.

Of the bridal pair, it was of course the girl who was likely to suffer more for, whereas the boy remained at home, she at a tender age was taken from her family and abandoned, with probably only a few attendants of her own environment, in a new community completely strange to her, probably in a foreign country whose language she neither understood nor spoke, and whose customs were very different from what she had been used to. Poor five-year old Simonis buried in uncouth Serbia, the betrothed of a middle-aged barbarian five years older than her father. Yet her parents knowingly inflicted this fate upon her, the one for reasons of state, the other for family pride, with apparently no qualm of conscience. A second cousin of Simonis, Maria, suffered a similar fate in 1325/6, when at the age of twelve she was given in marriage to Stephen Uroš III Dečanski aged fifty, the Serbian King, to keep his mind off alliances with western political powers; and a few years later also a niece of Simonis was sacrificed to the cause of politics. Of this latter marriage Cantacuzenus records that when in 1339 the Bulgarian Czar Alexander approached Andronicus III requesting the hand of his daughter for his son, Andronicus «would have preferred his daughter to have continued living at home [she was then nine years old] than to give her in marriage to the son of Alexander, aged fifteen, for he was sure that life with the barbarians would not be pleasant for one who had been brought up according to Greek and imperial customs and ways. All the same, he judged that the union would be to the advantage of the Roman State and so he agreed to the marriage».²⁷

politically the marriage was a success. Gregoras records: «And thereafter there was a deep peace between Romans and Bulgarians» (Greg. I, 546). Cantacuzenus himself did not hesitate to send his daughter to a Turkish harem to ensure a supply of Turkish troops, but he did rather apologise for it by dilating on her charity there in ransoming Christian slaves and in encouraging Christians in danger of adopting Islamism to remain true to their traditional faith.²⁸ What the children thought about it and about the callousness of their parents we do not know. They seemingly bore no malice. The one-time five-year old bride Simonis, dined with her old father, Andronicus II, on what turned out to be the eve of his death (13 Feb. 1332).

Whether the young brides were in the event happy is hard to say. Some of them certainly would have been, for wherever they were they would have had a multitude of servants to attend on them, rich living and honours. Wars were incessant and husbands were often away fighting for long periods. There would have been anxiety and probably responsibility to direct affairs wisely in such absences and to prevent unrest. They usually had a large family and that while they were still young. As often as not they were soon widows and then they returned to their old homes and families, perhaps to enter again on another diplomatic marriage, perhaps to live quietly in obscurity, perhaps to enter a convent where, may be, their mother or an aunt or a sister was already a nun. Empresses and ladies of rank often either founded or enlarged convents precisely so that they could retire to them in their latter years. Indeed not always in their latter years. Irene Choumnos, the daughter of the very rich Logothete Nicephorus Choumnos, was to be betrothed to Alexius, the young Emperor of Trebizond, so, as she was a commoner, she was given imperial status by Andronicus II. Alexius, however, preferred an Armenian bride, and princess Irene, left high and dry, was married to John, son of Andronicus II and Empress Irene. She was 12 years old; he about 15. Four years later John died and Irene at the age of 16 was left a widow. She did not marry again. In-

²⁷ *Cant.*, I, pp. 504-5. This marriage had been a condition of the treaty of 1331 between Andronicus and Alexander, when Eirene was only three years old (*Cant.*, I, pp. 468-9). Cf. U.V. Bosch, *Andronikos III Palaiologos* (Amsterdam 1965) pp. 80-1.

²⁸ *Cant.*, II, pp. 588-9.

stead, she rebuilt an old convent in which, as superior, she ruled with no little severity. Her influence outside the convent was considerable. When the controversy over Palamism broke out, she was a vigorous anti-Palamite, as were other royal personages like the Cralaina Simonis and Theodora Palaeologina, the daughter of Emperor Michael IX, and, not content with personal opposition, she organized a whole group of friends and relations to rally to her side. With all that, she was a spiritual woman and a large correspondence between her and her two spiritual directors survives to prove it. She lived long in the cloister, dying in about 1360.²⁹

Not all, what one may call, society nuns were as active and influential outside the convent walls as Irene-Eulogia. For the most part they lived pious lives of good works, following the rule of the community in a broad way and, while they still kept some contact with the outer world, they prepared themselves in peace for death. There was much to be said for such a way of ending.

²⁹ V. Laurent, 'Une princesse byzantine au cloître, Irène-Eulogie Choumnos Paléologue', in *Echos d'Orient* 29 (1930) 29-60; *idem* 'La direction spirituelle à Byzance. La correspondance d'Irène-Eulogie Choumnaina Paléologine avec son second directeur', *REB* 14 (1956) 48-86.

VENICE, GENOA AND BYZANTIUM

JOSEPH GILL

The city of Venice had from its earliest days a close relationship with Byzantium. It was located within the Roman Empire ruled from the Bosphorus, and, when Byzantine power receded in Italy, tucked in, as it was, in the north-west corner of the Adriatic Sea, it managed by various means, by arms or by diplomacy, to escape being overrun by any of the conquerors of Italy and to remain isolated but still attached to Byzantium. Situated on, indeed in, the sea, it was a port. Its willing dependence on Constantinople gave its commerce free entry to the whole of the Byzantine Empire stretching deep into Asia Minor. It became a gateway to the west for the products of the far east brought by caravans to Constantinople and other east-Mediterranean ports. It grew in size, in wealth and in importance, and it developed large ship-yards and a very big fleet ¹.

Its ties with Constantinople became closer in 1081. Robert Guiscard who had established Norman power in southern Italy aspired to conquer Constantinople. He took Corfù and besieged Durazzo. The Byzantine Emperor Alexius I Comnenus, hard put to it to mount an adequate defence, appealed to Venice to use its fleet to break the bloc-

¹ A classic account is W. Heyd, *Histoire du Commerce du Levant au Moyen-âge* (Stuttgart 1859), trans. F. Raynaud 1885-6, anastatic reprint Amsterdam 1959. Also C. Manfroni, *Storia della marina italiana*, 2 vols. (Livorno 1902-5). For texts of treaties between Byzantium and Venice: G.L.F. Tafel and G.M. Thomas, *Urkunden zur älteren Handels- und Staatsgeschichte der Republik Venedig*, 3 parts (= *Fontes Rerum Austriacarum*, Abt. II, vols. XII-XIV) (Vienna, 1856-7); hereafter *TT*: up to year 1199. G.M. Thomas, *Diplomatarium Veneto-Levantinum* (Venice 1899).

For the texts of treaties between Genoa and Byzantium: *Atti della Società ligure di Storia patria* XIII (1854) and XXVIII (1896-8), *Documenta*. Greek documents: F. Miklosich and J. Müller, *Acta et diplomata graeca medii aevi sacra et profana*, 6 vols. (Vienna 1860-90) of which vols. I and III pertain to our subject: hereafter *MM*. F. Dölger, *Regesten der Kaiserurkunden des oströmischen Reiches*, in 5 parts (Munich-Berlin 1924-65): hereafter *Dölger*.

kade of the beleaguered port. The Venetians, anxious in their own interests to prevent anyone else but themselves dominating the Adriatic, succeeded in the task assigned to them, though Durazzo fell before the assaults of Guiscard's land forces. Alexius had promised his allies extraordinary commercial privileges as a reward for their help. A chrysobull of 1084 granted them all they could have hoped for - quarters in Constantinople and other ports, and complete freedom from taxation for their sales and purchases and from harbour dues throughout the whole of the Byzantine Empire. Such an extensive privilege put Venice in a position of commercial supremacy that no rival could equal. It was a triumph for the City of the Lagoons, but a millstone round the neck of the Byzantines ².

The commercial activity of Genoa and Pisa on the west coast of Italy developed more slowly than that of Venice, partly because of the internal organisation of these two towns, partly because of recurring Arab raids and of incessant Arab piracy on the seas around them. In any case, until the middle of the eleventh century when the two cities combined to subdue the Arab bases in Africa and the islands, and Roger the Norman got control of the whole of Sicily, what there was of commerce was directed rather to the western Mediterranean. Later their ships penetrated as far as Syria and Egypt. But their trade in the Levant was languid till the start of the crusades.

It is true that the bulk of the armies of the first two crusades travelled by land, but sea transport was extremely useful for a great variety of things, for carrying crusaders (not all went overland), goods of all kinds, provisions, weapons, siege-engines etc., and, most of all, ships were essential for completing the blockade of besieged enemy ports - the army could function only on land; ships were needed to prevent reinforcements and provisions entering from the sea - and when it came to the final assault ships and their crews joined in the attack: but for a price. The price was the promise of an independent 'quarter' in the captured city. The princes and leaders of the armies willingly promised what was asked and usually in the end kept their word.

² Text in *TTI* no. XXIII, pp. 51-4; LI, pp. 116-23; LXX, pp. 182-6. These give, not the original text which has not survived, but copies of it incorporated into later treaties. The text enumerates the names of the biggest towns and ports, not as exclusive, but as indicative of the completeness of the grant.

A 'quarter' consisted of at least a number of houses, a building suitable for purposes of administration and justice, a site for a church, a large warehouse for merchandise and perhaps a 'tower' as a kind of fortress; altogether a compact, independent enclave within the territory of the local authority's jurisdiction. At first only those nations that had shared in the fighting could claim a quarter; later also others were granted sites. The Pisans, the Genoese and rather later the Venetians acquired quarters in some or most of the ports on the Syrian coast and each group jealously guarded its rights, for these quarters were the base from which its merchants carried on a rich and lucrative trade. They brought in various commodities from the west and exchanged them for the luxuries of the east. Many of the towns of Syria were noted for specialities - Damascus, for example, produced exquisite brocades - and in addition caravan routes from the far-east converged on Syria bringing loads of exotic spices, silks, precious woods and metal work, for which there was a ready market in western Europe. The Pisans, the Genoese and the Venetians were the three biggest maritime nations and had the largest number of quarters, and each was jealous in the extreme to preserve its rights against its commercial rivals and against the civil authorities. On a smaller scale merchants from many other nations were also active in the same trades.

The movement of so many ships between Italy and the Levant where Emperor Alexius of Constantinople also had territorial interests, and the propaganda that Bohemond of Antioch was disseminating in the courts of Europe against him, led the Byzantine Emperor to cultivate friendly relations with the Pisans. In October 1111 he made a treaty with them granting considerable trading privileges and assigning to them a quarter and a quay in Constantinople³. Venice was affronted at others breaking into its monopoly and showed it. The Venetians were further incensed when on the death of Alexius (1118) they approached his successor John Comnenus for a renewal of their treaty and were met with a refusal. John wanted to weaken their privileged position in the trade of the Empire. But the Venetians, claiming that the concessions given by Alexius were immutable and permanent, sent a fleet to ravage Greek coastal areas, islands and ship-

³ G. Müller, *Documenta sulle relazioni delle città Toscane coll' Oriente cristiano e coi Turchi* (Florence 1870) pp. 43-5; 52-4.

ping till the Emperor had to yield ⁴. So the treaty was renewed and, when in 1147 Roger from Sicily launched an attack on Corfù and the Greek mainland, Venice fought valiantly on the Greek side. As a reward their quarter in Constantinople was enlarged to suit their increased trade, and their tax exemptions were extended to cover also commerce with Crete and Cyprus (1148). The native Greeks in their own Greek ports had to pay various taxes that the foreigners were exempt from and not unnaturally came to regard them with a fierce hostility which by every new imperial concession was further inflamed, especially as the Venetians in particular waxed rich and proud and disdainful of the Greeks.

Partly to counterbalance the dominating position of the Venetians and partly to gain allies in Italy where he was pouring out money to win friends for a league he planned against Sicily, Manuel I Comnenus, John's successor, offered the Genoese a quarter in Constantinople. The offer was accepted but the first Genoese who settled there were forcibly driven out by the Pisans who scented rivalry. Another treaty was made in 1169 by which Genoa acquired equality of privileges with the Pisans. They returned to their quarter only to be forced out again, and this time the attack was attributed to the Venetians at least by Manuel, though probably it was not they who were responsible. Manuel at that time was incensed against Venice because it refused him assistance in his proposed campaign against William of Sicily and because it opposed his friendship with Ancona which it regarded as a commercial rival. The Greek Emperor's antagonism was translated into action. On 12 March 1171, in a carefully timed coup, he arrested all the Venetians in the Empire and confiscated their goods. The Venetians were infuriated and sent a hurriedly prepared fleet to ravage the Greek coast, but it fell victim to disease and achieved little.

Manuel died in 1180 with Venice still unplaced. In Constantinople there was administrative chaos as ruler followed ruler - the young heir Alexius III Comnenus was murdered in 1183 by his uncle, Andronicus I Comnenus, who reigned till he was murdered (1185), but not before in 1182 he had connived at a savage massacre of the Latins in Constantinople by a mob driven on by its pent up hatred of the pam-

⁴ It is to be noted that this is the first time that an Italian power used such means to impose its will on a Byzantine Emperor. It was a sad precedent that would be followed often in years to come.

pered foreign merchants who waxed rich on their poverty and ruined their commerce. At that time there were probably about 60,000 Latins in Constantinople ⁵. In the massacre thousands were murdered, thousands sold into slavery and their property stolen or destroyed. When Isaac II Angelus followed Andronicus on the throne an army of William II of Sicily had traversed northern Greece from Durazzo and was blockading Thessalonica which it took and pillaged (1185). The Normans, however, got no further than Thessalonica, and Constantinople was saved from attack. But the Empire was being assailed from all sides by Bulgarians, Serbians and a 'plague of pirates' ⁶.

The pirates were chiefly Pisans and Genoese systematically raiding coastal towns and shipping in the Aegean in reprisal for the losses of the massacre of 1182 and to damage the trade of their rivals, especially Venice. The Emperor, of course, complained, but the home towns Pisa and Genoa disclaimed any responsibility for what they said were the 'acts of individuals'. There was no Byzantine fleet capable of policing the seas, so Emperor Isaac had recourse to diplomacy and, though he had no effective bargaining-counter except the reciprocal jealousies of the Italians, nevertheless he negotiated acceptable treaties with all three of them. He could not lessen their privileges but he did not appreciably extend them and he included an element of parity by engaging the other parties to accept an obligation to aid Byzantium in certain specified circumstances with ships and men to a stated degree. To satisfy Venice, in February 1187 he reissued the chrysobulls of the Comnenans Alexius, John and Manuel ⁷, and in November his successor Alexius II Angelus issued them still again with Isaac's addition and with a new paragraph of his own which spelled out enactments about jurisdiction in mixed law-suits. Treaties were made with Pisa (February 1192) and with Genoa (April 1192) renewing the grants made by former Emperors of tariffs of 4 per cent, special quarters and quays, and specified gifts of money and goods by the Emperor.

The treaties were normally renewed when there was a new Byzan-

⁵ Eustathius, 'De Thessalonica urbe a Latinis capta narratio' in *Eustathii opuscula*, ed. T.L.F. Tafel (Frankfort 1832) p. 275

⁶ The phrase is from C.M. Brand, *Byzantium Confronts the West 1180-1204* (Cambridge, Mass. 1968) p. 42.

⁷ *IT* I, LXX-LXXI, 179-203; *Dölger*, 3, nn. 1376-8.

tine Emperor and at the initiative of the Italian power, or when events had clearly broken relations. The aim of the Italians was to guarantee the continuance primarily of the initial grant of privileges because it was the most thorough-going and then of whatever other advantages had been conceded subsequently. They regarded these as basic, permanent, irrefragable and not open to negotiation, and they were determined to retain them. However much the Byzantine Emperors resented them, their position was too weak for them to offer continued resistance to the pressure put on them. Under Alexius III, who disliked the Venetians, the Pisans were the most flourishing foreign community in Constantinople, at any rate till 1201 when two Pisan merchants connived at the escape to the west of Prince Alexius, son of the blinded and imprisoned ex-Emperor Isaac.

The action of the Pisan merchants in conveying Prince Alexius to Italy had momentous consequences. Under his inspiration the Fourth Crusade was diverted from the Holy Land to Constantinople to restore his father to the throne. It succeeded, but to do that it had first to attack and capture Constantinople and, when Emperor Isaac and Emperor Alexius IV (for the prince was crowned Emperor) could not fulfil the promises of money, ships and men which had been a condition of crusader aid, the Latins, on 13 April 1204, took Constantinople again and installed themselves as rulers of the Byzantine Empire. The Venetians had taken the Cross in 1203 only after they had constrained the pilgrims into agreeing to a first diversion to capture and destroy Zara, a town in Dalmatia which they claimed was theirs. They alone among the crusaders knew precisely what they wanted when Constantinople was captured. Like good merchants, they had, before that event, made out the invoice of the transaction in an Agreed Pact. By it they were to get a very generous 'quarter' in Constantinople - three-eighths of the whole city - and other specified acquisitions comprising the most useful ports on the coasts of the Empire and certain islands, all admirable ports of call for their commercial fleets and, of course, closed to every other nation except with Venetian consent. Neither Pisa nor Genoa had taken part in the Fourth Crusade. With the fall of the Greek dynasty both had lost their privileges in the Eastern Empire. The Venetians had acquired a complete monopoly. The Genoese tried to establish themselves in Crete which lay conveniently on the route to Syria, but the Venetians challenged them and ultimately evicted them.

For a time the rivalry in the Aegean among the three great Italian maritime cities lay dormant, but it was still very active in Syria. In 1187 Saladin had disastrously routed the Christians at Hattin and had taken Jerusalem, Acre and all the other great centres except Tyre, Tripoli and Antioch. The Third Crusade with invaluable help in particular from Pisa and Genoa regained Acre in 1191 which, with the Italians established again in their old quarters, became the focus of revived western trading. The following half-century in *Outremer*, however, was characterised by continuous quarrels and wars among the Christian knights, hospitallers, ecclesiastics and, not least, commercial communities. Of these the Pisans were the most active against both the infidel and their trading rivals. The climax came in 1258 when a combined operation of Venetians and Pisans after weeks of fighting drove the Genoese out of Acre and divided their possessions between themselves. The Genoese, humiliated and furious, sought revenge. To avenge themselves on the Pisans they had to wait till 1284 when they settled the controversial ownership of Corsica by a crushing naval defeat from which Pisa never recovered. Occasion to punish the Venetians came much earlier.

The Latin Empire of Constantinople got off to a good start, but quickly languished. The fault lay partly in the greed of Venice which by the Agreed Pact received three-eighths of Constantinople itself ⁸ as well as a large colonial empire, without having any feudal obligation to aid the new Latin Emperor in war. The defeated Greeks set up two kingdoms of their own centred one in Nicaea in north-west Asia Minor, the other in Epirus on the west coast of mainland Greece. Each of their rulers aimed at recapturing Constantinople and making himself Emperor, and neither wasted time in setting about his task. Between them, they had already occupied Macedonia, Thessaly and much of Thrace by the time that the Latin Empire was twenty years old. But the strength of Constantinople's fortifications, the rivalry among its enemies and their lack of a fleet kept the capital city in Latin hands for more than half a century, though with ever diminishing control of the territory surrounding it.

In 1261 the ruler of Nicaea, Michael VIII Palaeologus, decided to

⁸ The Doge styled himself 'podestà and *dominator* of a quarter and a half of [a quarter of] "Romania"'. 77. I CXXI, pp 464-88.

hire a fleet and it was to Genoa, Venice's most bitter enemy, that he turned. He was to repeat the mistake of Alexius I Comnenus, and as it turned out a not very useful mistake because, before the treaty became effective, he had in fact recovered Constantinople (25 July 1261) and been crowned again (15 August). For its part Genoa knew that it was antagonising the papacy and the western powers by aiding the arch-enemy of the Latin Empire, but it could not bring itself to let any opportunities pass of humiliating Venice. By the Treaty of Nymphaeum, signed on 13 March 1261, Genoa pledged its whole-hearted support to Palaeologus in war with his enemies and peace with his friends (the Pisans counted among Michael's friends) and received in return its old quarter in Constantinople enlarged by the addition of the Venetian quarter⁹, possession of the port of Smyrna in Asia Minor, and stations in many other towns and islands. Michael further promised not to grant trading privileges to any enemy of Genoa (Venice) or permission to enter the Black Sea to any but Genoese and Pisans. The Genoese had thus effectively eliminated the Venetians from the areas under Greek rule and had acquired for themselves Venice's old monopoly of trade. But the Peloponnese was still in Latin hands, and Epirus and parts of Thessaly and Macedonia were independent regions not subject to Michael VIII, so Venice still had its own and other friendly ports for its commerce. To protect this, Venetian ships sailed into the Aegean and defeated a Greco-Genoese fleet.

Michael VIII Palaeologus was a strong man and he found the Genoese overbearing: indeed one of them was convicted of plotting against him. So he cancelled his treaty with them and turned them out of their quarter in Constantinople, sending them to distant Heraclea. He then made overtures to Venice (1265). In return for an alliance and assistance in war he offered to evict the Genoese from his Empire altogether and to grant establishments in Constantinople and many other large towns for Venetian trade. The Venetians were faced with a dilemma. In Italy Baldwin II, the refugee Latin Emperor, with the

⁹ Text in C. Manfroni, 'Le relazioni fra Genoa, l'impero bizantino e i Turchi' in: *Atti liguri* XXVIII. Doc. I, pp. 791-809. One condition of the treaty was that the *castrum* which the Venetians had built in their quarter should be demolished. The Genoese did that with joy and sent off stones of it to Genoa, just as the Venetians had sent to Venice stones from the Genoese citadel of Acre when they had demolished it.

help of Charles of Anjou, was organising an expedition to retake Constantinople for the Latins which, if it succeeded, would automatically restore to them all their old possessions and advantages. An alliance with Palaeologus, on the other hand, would oblige them to employ their arms to frustrate every such action. So they dallied and in the end (1268) agreed to a treaty for five years. By it Michael VIII acquiesced in their peaceful possession of Coron and Modon in the south-west of the Peloponnese and of Crete where hitherto he had been helping the Greeks oppose them; he stipulated that Venetians and Genoese should not try to settle their private quarrels by warfare in Byzantine waters¹⁰; but no longer would he exclude the Genoese from the Empire, and the Venetians would not be given quarters in the Greek ports they frequented except for the two cities of Constantinople and Thessalonica, but they would have to hire them.¹¹ This treaty was renewed in 1277.

The frustrated ambitions of the ex-Emperor Baldwin and the belligerent attitude of the King of Sicily constituted a continuous threat to the security of his Empire, so Michael Palaeologus could ill afford to antagonise both of the most powerful naval nations of Italy and thrust them into the arms of his arch-enemy. Venice was clearly unreliable and only waiting to see where its own advantage lay. So in 1267 Michael renewed friendly relations with the Genoese. He let them return from Heraclea but even so would not have them in Constantinople: they were too numerous. He located them across the Golden Horn at Pera-Galata¹².

Danger to the Byzantine Empire from Sicily ceased when in 1282 a spontaneous uprising drove Anjou's forces out and welcomed Peter of Aragon. Michael VIII died later the same year. His successor was Andronicus II Palaeologus who had not the same strength of character and toughness as his father. Yet the situation he had to face was very difficult. Within the Empire there was deep division because of religi-

¹⁰ «ab introitu Avedi [i.e. Abydi] nec intra Avedum in terra vel acqua nec in aliqua parte infra terminum dictum, nec in Mari Majore. Et homines Januae facient simile de hominibus Venetis». *TT* III, no. CCCLVIII (p. 96), 30 July 1268, repeated in later treaties with Venice and in treaties with Genoa.

¹¹ *MM* III, XX, pp. 76-84; *TT* III, CCCLVIII, pp. 92-100.

¹² Full details of this treaty, as of its renewal in 1275 and 1280, have not been preserved.

ous controversy ¹³ and the imperial treasury was nearly empty. On all the borders of the Empire there were potential enemies, and the Aegean Sea was swarming with pirates - the Genoese and the Venetians were carrying on their inveterate quarrels by harassing each other's shipping and coastal stations, and, besides, freebooters of all sorts, including Greeks, took advantage of the disorder to get rich. Andronicus, to lighten the burden of taxation that his father had imposed, neglected the upkeep of the fleet and was powerless to protect even his own coastal areas. The capture by the Saracens in 1291 of Acre, the last stronghold and port of the Latins in Syria, put a stop to free commerce for Christians in the Levant. Trade in the Aegean and the Black Sea, therefore, took on a new importance, and the occasions of friction between the trading nations were multiplied.

The chronic hostility between Genoa and Venice broke into open warfare in 1294. Genoa was successful in raids on Crete and on the towns of Modon and Coron. Venice retaliated with a fleet that utterly destroyed Galata (1296). The Galatans flocked for protection into Constantinople which successfully withstood a Venetian assault, while the Genoese refugees within the city attacked the Venetian quarter and killed many of those who had not escaped in time. In 1299 Venice and Genoa made peace between themselves, but Constantinople was not included. Thereupon Venice demanded from the Greeks indemnities for its maltreated citizens and their damaged property. Andronicus replied with a counter claim. The impasse was ended when in 1301 a Venetian fleet appeared off Constantinople, burnt Greek properties in front of the imperial palace and pillaged the neighbouring islands while the Greeks perforce, for lack of a fleet, looked on impotent. Andronicus was compelled (7 March 1303) to withdraw his claim to indemnities and to promise payment of the large bill presented by the Venetians (1303) ¹⁴.

This incident set the tone for the rest of the century. Venice and

¹³ Michael VIII had been excommunicated by Patriarch Arsenius for blinding the legitimate heir to the throne, nine-year-old John Lascaris: he had Arsenius deposed, which caused a widespread opposition of «Arsenites» and that movement had been greatly strengthened and deepened by the union with the Latin Church, declared at Lyons in 1274, which Michael had tried by violent means to impose on the eastern Church.

¹⁴ G. Pachymeres, *De Andronico Palaeologo*, ed. I. Bekker (CSHB, Bonn 1835) pp. 624 f.

Genoa despite their treaty obligations fight in Byzantine waters; Byzantium inevitably suffers some indignity and is forced to favour one side rather than the other; the original belligerent parties make peace and leave Byzantium naked before the one it has not helped, which then by strong-arm methods imposes a peace to its own advantage and a large indemnity. Always it is Byzantium that suffers.

The Genoese colony, Galata, destroyed by the Venetians in 1296, was rebuilt in the early years of the fourteenth century within the limits assigned to it by the Emperor, but on a grander scale. With its excellent organisation and the extraordinary commercial privileges it enjoyed, it surpassed Constantinople itself as a centre of commercial activity not only for the Genoese, but also for Greeks, Venetians and the many other trading nations. The historian Gregoras asserts that by the year 1350 Galata had revenues of 200,000 hyperpers a year as against the 30,000 of Constantinople¹⁵. The Venetians were in a far less favourable position: only in Constantinople and Thessalonica was the quarter assigned to them at the Emperor's expense; elsewhere they did not own but hired. The grip of the Galatans on the life of Constantinople was almost complete, for Constantinople depended on Genoese ships for the import of corn to feed its population, as was shown when, in retaliation for the loss of two Genoese ships (as the Greek historian Nicephorus Gregoras relates), «The Galatans, looking on this as a disgrace to themselves as well as a loss, stopped supplying corn to Byzantium, in the knowledge that the Byzantines could get it from no other source, and that it lay in their hands whether Constantinople lived or ran the risk of starvation; and they threatened to inflict other penalties»¹⁶.

This event occurred in the course of the civil war when Empress Anna, regent for her son John V Palaeologus, was holding Constantinople against the usurper John VI Cantacuzenus. In 1347 Cantacuzenus forced Anna to capitulate, and one of the first things he set himself to do when he was firmly on the throne was to construct a navy so as to make Byzantium less helpless in face of the Italian powers. That the

¹⁵ Nicephorus Gregoras, *Byzantina Historia*, ed. L. Schopen - I. Bekker, 3 vols. (CSHB, Bonn 1829-55) II, p. 842.

¹⁶ *Ibid.* pp. 766-7.

Genoese were determined to prevent. They fortified Galata though it was contrary to their treaty and burnt Greek houses and shipping on their side of the Golden Horn, but when they attacked Constantinople itself they were beaten off. The Greeks put all their energies into building ships. As soon as the spring weather came the new fleet was launched to attack Galata, when for no apparent reason a sudden panic seized the sailors and marines; they abandoned their vessels, and the Genoese towed them away (March 1349) ¹⁷. In the subsequent arrangement made with Genoa the Greeks did not fare too badly: they were given back the land the Galatans had unlawfully annexed and were paid a large indemnity for the damage done to their property ¹⁸. Cantacuzenus renewed his treaty with Venice on 9 September of that same year.

Meanwhile a Genoese corsair, Vignosi, had seized the island of Chios and the towns of New and Old Phocaea on the gulf of Smyrna (12 September 1346), places that produced alum and mastic and brought in a very rich revenue to their owners. Commerce in the Black Sea was expanding rapidly as the possibilities of traffic in skins, wax, oil, fish, rare products brought overland from the Far East by caravan, and especially corn, were being developed. Genoa determined to exclude Venice from this profitable market. There were in consequence minor raids and naval engagements. The Genoese Vignosi from Chios made a surprise descent on Venetian Negroponte and inflicted enormous damage (September 1350). A Venetian fleet of 25 sail appeared off Galata in summer 1351. Emperor Cantacuzenus remained neutral. When, however, on the departure of the Venetian fleet the Galatans in derision twice catapulted heavy stones into Constantinople, he took the side of the Venetians. Then Genoa made an alliance with the Turkish Emir Orchan. On 13 February 1352 a large Genoese fleet met a

¹⁷ Gregoras records that the fleet consisted of 9 big triremes and very many monoremes. Several writers describe the astounding event. They say that there was a sudden squall that upset the unpractised rowers, but none ventures an explanation of the intensity of the panic and its universality, for the army on its way to attack Galata by land ran away too. John Cantacuzenus, *Historiarum Libri IV*, ed. L. Schopen, 3 vols. (CSHB, Bonn 1828-32) III, pp. 68-80; Gregoras, *Op. cit.* II, pp. 841-67; A. Makrembolites, *Historical Discourse*, in A. Papadopoulos-Kerameus, *Analecta Hierosolymitikes Stachyologias I* (St. Peterburg 1891) pp. 157-8.

¹⁸ Gregoras, *Op. cit.*, pp. 866-7. Cantacuzenus records only concessions in regard to Chios.

combined Venetian and Aragonese force ¹⁹ - some 140 ships altogether were involved, of which twelve were Greek, which withdrew in the midst of the fighting. After a long day's battle, the engagement was broken off. The Venetian admiral Pisani waited at anchor for a time and then sailed away. Once more Constantinople was left alone to face a victorious enemy. Galata with its Turkish allies prepared to besiege the city. Cantacuzenus sued for peace. He had to agree to exclude Venetian and Catalan ships from all his ports, to forbid his subjects to trade with or serve Genoa's enemies; to acquiesce in the fortification of Galata and to renew all old privileges.

While the Christians were thus wasting their strength in fighting each other, the Turks had overrun Asia Minor and had occupied and fortified the town of Gallipoli (1354) which gave them an easy port of entry into Europe divided there from Asia by only the narrow Dardanelles. At the same time Byzantium was being torn apart not only by the quarrels of Venice and Genoa, but also by the rivalry for the imperial throne, held since the agreement of 1347 conjointly by the usurper John VI Cantacuzenus and the legitimate heir of Andronicus III, John V Palaeologus. But the younger Emperor was not content with only joint rule; he aimed at making himself sole ruler. The Venetians still hoped to acquire the island of Tenedos which, owing to its commanding position at the entrance of the Dardanelles was a most desirable refuge for shipping and would offset the advantages that Galata, situated at the entrance of the Bosphorus, gave to the Genoese. So they readily entered into negotiations with Palaeologus and lent him money. Genoa, too, gave him some support. In 1354 John Cantacuzenus abdicated ²⁰ and three years later his son, Matthew, who had been crowned some time earlier was forced to do the same.

Becoming sole Emperor did not solve the problems besetting John V and his Empire. His main preoccupation was how to stem the advance of the Turks. He appealed to the Popes who tried but failed to unite the warring kings of western Europe in a kind of crusade to repel the infidel and who could not, any more than the Byzantine Emperor, persuade Genoa and Venice to forget their reciprocal hatreds in the

¹⁹ Aragon and Genoa were rival claimants for the ownership of Sardinia. Aragon joined Venice «ad confusionem, destructionem et exterminium finale Januensium», quoted by Heyd. I, p. 505, n. 2.

²⁰ He became a monk with the name of Joasaph.

cause of Christianity. Palaeologus went in person to Buda to enlist the co-operation of Louis I king of Hungary but he did not succeed (1366)²¹. In 1369 he journeyed to Rome and accepted the western faith. The Pope urged the Latins to render him assistance, without avail. While he was in Rome he negotiated with Venetian envoys about payment of the debts he owed to the Signoria. The Venetians claimed more than twenty thousand hyperpers as indemnity for damage done in the past to Venetian property and a further thirty thousand ducats to repay money advanced to Empress Anna who in 1343 had pawned the crown jewels to be able to carry on the civil war. For their part the Venetians were ready to agree to an accommodation if the Emperor would cede to them the island of Tenedos. John agreed and then changed his mind and was detained in Venice till one of his sons hastened to pay the debts he had run up during his stay there²². He reached Constantinople again on 28 October 1371 to learn that the Turks had inflicted a crushing defeat on the Serbs near the Marica river a month before (26 September).

For nearly twenty years John V had tried to obtain from the west military help against the Turks without any success, and by 1373 his Empire was very small. A large part of the Peloponnese was in Greek hands, but ruled by Manuel Cantacuzenus almost independently of Constantinople. Apart from that all that the Empire possessed was an area in Thrace round Constantinople, Thessalonica and its neighbourhood, a few islands and a few towns on the Black Sea. The Turks were forever advancing, so, to preserve for himself what he still held, he became a vassal of Sultan Murad, pledged to pay annual tribute and to aid his liege-lord in war. He was campaigning with Murad when his son and heir Andronicus combined with Murad's son in rebellion against their parents. Both were defeated. Both were punished by being blinded, and Andronicus with his small son John was closely confined in prison.

A few years later the Venetians again demanded payment of their debts and renewal of their treaty with Byzantium²³. John brought up

²¹ J. Gill, 'John V Palaeologus at the Court of Louis I of Hungary (1366)', *BS* 38 (1977) 31-8.

²² J. Chrysostomides, 'Studies on the Chronicle of Jan Jacopo Caroldo with special reference to the History of Byzantium from 1370 to 1377', *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 35 (1969) 123-82.

²³ In negotiations Venice was relentless in its pressure on the Emperor; cf. J. Chrysostomides, 'Venetian Commercial Privileges under the Palaeologi', *Studi Veneziani* XII (1970) 267-356.

again the question of Tenedos and agreed, in return for the crown jewels and 30,000 ducats, to allow its use to Venice under joint Greco-Venetian rule. The Genoese reacted quickly and contrived the escape of Andronicus from prison, and with the help of their Turkish allies assailed Constantinople which they entered after thirty-two days of siege, whereupon John V and his sons Manuel and Theodore were imprisoned in a dungeon of the Anemas Tower. Already before that date Andronicus had paid his allies the price of their assistance - he had yielded Tenedos to Genoa on 23 August and Gallipoli to Murad on 3 September. But the Venetians also had not been inactive. Before the Genoese moved to occupy the island, in October an admiral of theirs annexed it, welcomed by the inhabitants who remained faithful to John. There followed diplomatic protests and naval skirmishes; Andronicus joined Genoa in an attack on Tenedos; Venice bombarded Constantinople; and the war of Tenedos developed into the war of Chioggia, in which Venice itself was blockaded by land and sea and nearly succumbed, but was rescued by a providential fleet that hemmed in and destroyed the besieging Genoese fleet. The exhausted cities made peace in 1382.

For once a treaty between Genoa and Venice took cognisance of Byzantium. There the situation had changed again, for John V and Manuel had escaped - almost miraculously, it was thought, as their prison had been so strong and so well guarded. They had gone straight to the Sultan and then with Turkish troops and Venetian ships had besieged Constantinople till Andronicus, who had had himself crowned in 1377, fled with his son John to Galata (1 June 1379). He was furious at this reversal of fortune and, believing that it must have been members of his own family who had engineered the escape of his father, he took with him his mother and her sisters and his aged grandfather (monk Joasaph, John VI Cantacuzenus) and confined them under guard in a miserable habitation in Galata. John V with his Turks and Venetians proceeded to blockade Galata and the siege continued for nearly two years, till April 1381 when father and son made a truce by which they promised to keep the peace and John acknowledged Andronicus as his heir and after him his grandson John, and Andronicus was given an appanage in the area south of Constantinople centred on Selymbria²⁴. This agreement was repeated in a more solemn treaty in

²⁴ After Andronicus's rebellion of 1373 John V had disinherited him in favour of his second son, Ma-

which Genoa was a contracting party, signed in Constantinople on 2 November 1382.

Genoa and Andronicus never meant to abide by the treaty, as the sequel showed. Within a few years Andronicus tried to occupy one of his father's fortified towns. John V raised an army to oppose him (Manuel, his second son, was then in Thessalonica). Happily he was victorious, though not before his life had been in jeopardy in the course of the fighting ²⁵. Shortly after his defeat Andronicus died on 28 June 1385. Plots were hatched in Galata against the older Emperor who protested to the Genoese authorities and complained also that they accorded to Andronicus's son John imperial acclamations which they denied to him. The smouldering hostility burst into flame when the younger John with Turkish and Genoese help attacked Constantinople and with the connivance of traitors within gained entry on 13 April 1390. His grandfather John V took refuge in a fortress near the Golden Gate, which was continuously bombarded to force the old man to surrender. But before that could occur, Manuel Palaeologus with a few ships brought provisions and support (15 August) and eventually (25 September) in a surprise sally from the fortress threw John VII out of the city. John V died on 16 February 1391. Manuel and young John were both serving in the Sultan's army when the news came of the Emperor's death. Manuel did not hesitate. With all speed he left the Sultan's camp and hastened to Constantinople where he established himself on the throne. The Turkish Sultan acquiesced in the *fait accompli* as long as the new Emperor did not forget that he was a tribute-paying vassal. But as soon as Manuel showed signs of independence, he began a siege of the city in 1394, which lasted till 1402.

In 1396 to break the siege and to dispel the threat to Europe from the ever advancing Turkish troops, a strong crusade under Sigismund, King of Hungary, composed mainly of French and Hungarian knights, moved south from the Danube. It met the Turkish army at Nicopolis and was disastrously defeated. Most of the knights were killed or taken prisoner. Sigismund reached Constantinople in a small boat, lucky to have escaped. The siege went on. Emperor Manuel journeyed to Italy,

nuel. In this agreement, which was solemnly confirmed by the Holy Synod, May 1381 (cf. *MM* 11, no 344, p. 25), Manuel's claim was passed over and his name was not mentioned.

²⁵ R.-J. Loenertz, 'Fragment d'une lettre de Jean V Paléologue à Gênes, *BZ* 51 (1958) 37-41.

France and England seeking money and men. He was still in Paris when news reached him that the siege was ended. It was not the Christians who had defeated Sultan Bayezid, but Timurlane, the Mongol Khan.

As is plain from what has been here recounted the history of Byzantium over the century before the death of John V is largely the story of its involvement with the three powers, Genoa, Venice and the Turks. Each of these centred all its aims and activities on its own aggrandisement. The two Italian cities were locked in an increasingly bitter rivalry for commercial domination, and the scene of their struggle was, unfortunately, the Byzantine Empire. They had no interest in the Empire, its Emperor and the well-being of its inhabitants, save in so far as these furthered their aims, which they pursued relentlessly. The Turks had one purpose which they strove inexorably to attain, to subdue, to subject, the Christians. The chronic enmity reigning among these made their task easy. By the middle of the fourteenth century it was the Turks who called the tune and Byzantium in particular, but also Venice and Genoa, danced accordingly. The inevitable consequences were delayed for a few decades only because Timurlane, the Mongol, defeated Sultan Bayezid at Ankara in 1402.

Fifty years later Mehmet II besieged Constantinople. This time there was no Timurlane to intervene; nor was there any one else. No fleet from Venice, no fleet from Genoa hastened to the rescue. From the west, only a private individual, Giovanni Giustiniani Longo, leading a group of Genoese, and the Greek cardinal Isidore with a company of two hundred crossbowmen hired at his own expense came to the help of the inhabitants of Constantinople and fought side by side with the last Byzantine Emperor Constantine XI Dragases, till on 29th May 1453 Constantinople, the queen of all cities, fell to the arms of the Turks.

SOME CONSIDERATIONS ON BYZANTINE SOCIETY AND ECONOMY IN THE SEVENTH CENTURY

JOHN F. HALDON / BIRMINGHAM

The nature of the «transition» within the Roman world from ancient to medieval social and cultural forms has occupied historians for decades, but the discussion has gained momentum in recent years with the publication of the results of a number of archaeological surveys of late Roman and Byzantine settlements in Asia Minor and the Balkans; together with the revival of the debate over the relationship between the Byzantine state, the economy which supported it, and the key structural elements of this economy, particularly the «city». In the present paper, I would like to ask some rather general questions and to look at some specific elements in the discussion mentioned above, in the context of the seventh and eighth centuries; and to reconsider the implications of the available evidence. Not surprisingly, a number of important problems will have to be left to one side, given the limited scope of the paper, but I hope it will be possible to demonstrate options for further work. I shall concentrate on the evidence for late Roman and Byzantine economic relations, for example, but will leave out of consideration political and cultural factors, notably the ideological tension between the central authority and other sections of late Roman society in the seventh century, questions which have been introduced elsewhere.¹ By the same token the whole problem of a Byzantine

¹ See J.F. Haldon, 'Some Remarks on the Background to the Iconoclast Controversy', *BS* 38 (1977) 161-184, esp. 163-166, 176 ff. What follows rehearses an approach already introduced in J.F. Haldon, H. Kennedy, 'The Arab-Byzantine Frontier in the Eighth and Ninth Centuries: Military Organisation and Society in the Borderlands', *ZRV* 19 (1980) 79-116. The problem of ideology as a concept; and the question of the ideological conflicts in seventh-century Byzantium, will be examined at length in a forthcoming publication.

To set aside temporarily questions of ideology, juridical structures, kinship, cultural production

«feudalism» will be touched upon only briefly, for I want here to establish the basic context for such a debate, and to look at and to question, from a historical materialist perspective, some of the premisses - both methodological and theoretical - upon which discussion has rested.

Let us consider initially the question of the «transition» itself. What sort of transition was this? How is it best described? - as a shift in the whole structure of a social formation, involving economic, political and cultural relations? - or as a transition within an ideological framework, in which emphases shift, and where values and attitudes which had previously been contextually impossible now come to dominate and to determine the appearance of the culture? I think there can be little doubt that these two are in fact inseparable - the question is to determine the pace at which change occurred, the stimuli for such change, and the complex structural relationship between different instances of the social formation, which lent to now one, now another, a determining influence.

So far, «transition» has been used because it is the term appearing most frequently in the debate hitherto. But we might justifiably query its use in such a context, for it is itself rather misleading, suggesting a change from one stable (ie. static) society to another; whereas Roman society represented in fact a dynamic and developing social formation. Thus «transition» carries with it certain unstated theoretical implications, encouraging us to view the history of societies as a series of leaps from one stable state to another. Several inferences follow from such a perspective. In particular, a view of historical societies is generated which conceptualises changes or shifts in social relations as «dysfunctions» of an equilibrium, and historical change as an effect of external, i.e. «accidental» factors.² Such a view *may* be accidentally justified (ac-

and so on is not, of course, to reduce the argument to a banal economism. All these instances and many others necessarily enter into the constitution of a social formation. It is merely to recognise the impossibility of dealing with the complex functional inter-relationships between these factors adequately here, and the superfluity of such a full analysis in the context of this particular discussion.

² 'Stable', unfortunately, often appears where 'static' is actually assumed, an approach which is implicit in the work of Etienne Balibar, 'Elements for a Theory of Transition', in: Louis Althusser, Etienne Balibar, *Reading Capital* (London 1970) pp. 273-308; as well as in that of much western sociology in the 40s and 50s: see C. Wright Mills, *The Sociological Imagination* (New York 1959).

cidentally because this conclusion is not reached through a theoretically coherent framework which is able to differentiate analytically between modes of production) in the case of those social formations typical of the modes of production which are exemplified in the structure of many so-called «primitive» societies examined by social anthropology, for example; but is certainly misleading when applied to any social formation with developed structural contradictions - such as feudal or industrial capitalist societies. For we would be forced to recognise all societies as permanently caught in a process of transition, but transition that is not integral to the structure of the society itself. The word loses any critical value it may once have possessed. For these reasons I will speak rather of development or shift, and movements within social relations of production.

The nature of the developments of the fifth to the eighth centuries is perhaps best summarised, at least initially, in terms of the most apparent differences between late Roman and Byzantine society, primarily their institutions and administrative organs; and the presence or not of «cities». It is clear that institutionally, in terms of its fiscal administration, its military organisation and the nature of its bureaucracy; and in terms of the function and appearance of its urban centres, the Byzantine state presents a different picture from that of late Rome - the latter a dispersed agglomeration of city-states, the former an administratively centralised network of village economies. Cities certainly existed and indeed flourished at certain periods of Byzantine history; but in spite of the «revival» of urban life after the middle of the ninth century, Byzantine «cities» were very different, both in origin and in function, from their western counterparts; and it was really only after the Ottoman occupation of Anatolia and the Balkans that urban life in the western sense developed and flourished.³ The seventh century,

The work of Talcott Parsons, with its abstracted functional models can be similarly criticised. See, for example, *The Social System* (New York 1951); *idem. Societies: Evolutionary and Comparative Aspects* (New York 1966); and for a summary and critique of Parson's work (among others), T.B. Bottomore, *Sociology as Social Criticism* (London 1975) pp. 29ff.

³ See, for a comparison, R. Latouche, *The Birth of Western Economy* (London ²1967) pp. 97 ff., 235 f; and, in spite of its shortcomings, Perry Anderson, *Passages from Antiquity to Feudalism* (London 1974) pp. 190 ff. For the Ottoman stimulus, see A.A.M. Bryer, 'The Late Byzantine Monastery in Town and Countryside', in: D. Baker, ed., *The Church in Town and Countryside* (= *Studies in*

and much of the eighth, saw, I believe, an almost total eclipse of urban life. This is, of course, crucial. For if, as is generally accepted, the classical city occupied a central role both in mediterranean society *and* in the Roman administrative machinery - as tax-collectors, as *foci* of regional agricultural activity, and as markets - then their eclipse in the period after the later sixth century must have considerable implications for the nature of the Byzantine state.⁴ At the same time, their observable «decline» during the preceding three centuries, or, to put it another way, the gradual change in their function and relevance to the needs of the Roman and Byzantine state machinery, must suggest a great deal about the structure of these states and the social formation(s) which they represent. What is the evidence for this development?

The hellenistic and Roman city had never been a centre of production. Commercial and industrial centres certainly existed, but they were comparatively few in number and were even then entirely dependent upon their hinterlands for their basic needs. Very few cities could exist on a non-agricultural basis, since the cost of transport of

Church History 16, Oxford 1979) 219-241, see 221 f, and see L. Maksimović, 'Charakter der sozial-wirtschaftlichen Struktur der spätbyzantinischen Stadt (13.-15. Jh.)', *JÖB* 31/1 (1981) 149-188 (= *Akten des XVI. Internationalen Byzantinistenkongresses* 1/1). Note also M. Angold, 'The Shaping of the Medieval Byzantine «City»', above.

⁴ This is to return to a revised version of Každan's views, first expressed in 'Vizantiiskie goroda v VII-IX vv.', *Sovetskaya Arkheologiya* 21 (1954) 164-188. Ostrogorsky suggested a rather different development, in 'Byzantine Cities in the Early Middle Ages', *DOP* 13 (1959) 47-66. See also M. Ya. Siuziumov, 'Vizantiiskii gorod (Seredina VII - Seredina IX v.)', *VV* 14 (1958) 38-70; E. Lipšic, 'K Voprosu o gorode v Vizantii v VII-IX v.', *VV* 6 (1953) 113-131; R.S. Lopez, 'The Role of Trade in the Economic Re-Adjustment of Byzantium in the Seventh Century', *DOP* 13 (1959) 69-85. For a summary of the discussion and further bibliography, see E. Frančes, 'La ville byzantine et la monnaie aux VII^e-VIII^e siècles', *Byzantinobulgarica* 2 (1966) 3-14, see 3 and note 2. For the most recent work, see C. Foss, 'The Fall of Sardis in 616 and the Value of Evidence', *JÖB* 24 (1975) 11-22; *idem*, *Byzantine and Turkish Sardis* (Cambridge, Mass./London 1976) pp. 257 ff; *idem*, 'Late Antique and Byzantine Ankara', *DOP* 31 (1977) 29-87; and Každan's penetrating critique of *Byzantine and Turkish Sardis*, in *Буџавтвѣ* 9 (1977) 478-484. For recent Soviet work, see G.L. Kurbatov, on the typology of Byzantine towns, in: *Simpozium po problemam istorii i istoriografii srednevekovogo goroda*, ed. O.I. Var'jat (Saratov 1977); *idem*, 'K probleme tipologii gorodskikh dviženii v Vizantii', in: *Problemy social'noi struktury i ideologii srednevekovogo obščestva* 2 (Leningrad 1978) pp. 44-61; and, in addition, L. Maksimović, *Charakter der sozial-wirtschaftlichen Struktur der spätbyzantinischen Stadt* (cited note 3 above).

foodstuffs overland was prohibitive.⁵ State intervention alone could suffice in such cases, as with Constantinople, for example. As Jones has very plausibly estimated, some 90-95% of the tax income of the later Roman empire was drawn from the land; while of the wealthy merchants, the vast majority were to begin with landowners who could afford to invest in «risky» trading ventures.⁶ Commerce was primarily for a wealthy elite, for peasants produced in the first instance for their own needs. The empire was in essence an agglomeration of subsistence economies. Peasants were generally forced to rely upon their own resources; and for articles they could not themselves produce, upon locally-obtained wares which they could obtain on an exchange basis. The wealthier landowners could afford to use the surpluses extracted from their estates to purchase luxuries, but they were, of course, limited in number. Problems of long-distance transport alone meant that the provinces of the empire were for the most part economically self-supporting.⁷

⁵ A.H.M. Jones, *The Greek City from Alexander to Justinian* (Oxford 1940) pp. 259-260, 262; *idem*, *The Later Roman Empire: a social, economic and administrative survey* (Oxford 1964) pp. 841-2, 844-7; E. Kirsten, 'Die byzantinische Stadt', in: *Berichte zum XI. Internationalen Byzantinisten-Kongress* (München 1958) 10 f.; D. Claude, *Die byzantinische Stadt im 6. Jhdt.* (Byz. Archiv 13, München 1969) 176 f. Note also R. Latouche, *The Birth of Western Economy* (cited note 3 above) p. 5; and Patlagean, *Pauvreté Économique et Pauvreté Sociale à Byzance, IV^e-VII^e siècles* (Paris 1977) pp. 156-235; and see M. de Waha's critique, *Byz* 49 (1979) 465-490, esp. 472 f.

⁶ For the difficulties connected with supplying Constantinople, see Jones, *LRE* pp. 695 f., 734-5; and for taxation, *ibid.*, pp. 465, 770. For merchants and commercial activity, see *LRE* pp. 770-772; and Jones, *The Greek City*, p. 265. Jones' conclusions are supported by Patlagean's work, see *Pauvreté économique*, pp. 271 ff.

⁷ *LRE* pp. 712 ff., 847, 855; *The Greek City*, pp. 260-261; cf. also Kirsten, *Die Byz. Stadt*, 10 f. On the agrarian subsistence nature of the Roman economy, see M. Crawford, 'Money and Exchange in the Roman World', *JRS* 60 (1970) 40-48, esp. 44; and A.H.M. Jones, 'The Economic Life of the Towns of the Roman Empire', *Recueils de la Société Jean Bodin* 7 (1955) 161-192 (repr. in A.H.M. Jones, *The Roman Economy. Studies in Ancient Economic and Administrative History*, ed. P.A. Brunt (Oxford 1974) pp. 35-60); also *idem*, *The Greek City*, p. 266. The terms «peasant» and «peasant society» as employed here are defined more closely in *Peasants and Peasant Societies*, ed. T. Shanin (Harmondsworth 1971) pp. 14 f. The market-role of the towns in which the landowners lived and into which the surplus extracted from the countryside consequently flowed, is discussed in Jones, *The Economic Life of the Towns of the Roman Empire*; and *idem*, 'The Cities of the Roman Empire: political, administrative and judicial functions', *Recueils de la Société Jean Bodin* 6 (1954) 135-173, repr. in Brunt, ed., *op. cit.*, 1-34, see 30-31. Cf. Jones, *The Greek City*, pp. 259 ff., 268-269; *LRE*, p. 714; Kirsten, *Die byz. Stadt*, 10 f., and Claude, *Die byz. Stadt im 6. Jhdt.*, 176 f.

What is important in this context is the separation of the «commercial» world from the complex circulatory economy of the state, and the transportation activity which accompanied the latter. This was itself restricted more or less to the cities, where it was related to the administrative apparatus and its bureaucratic superstructure - the civil and military officials, the army - and their needs. The transport of foodstuffs on a massive scale served these needs, was carried out by state controlled transport, and was supported by taxes and corvées extracted ultimately from the subsistence economy of the peasants.⁸ The concept of a «surplus redistribution» economy, based on a subsistence peasant agriculture, in which the aim of each producing group is to satisfy needs and in which there obtains a balance between subsistence requirements and the minimisation of physical labour, describes most accurately the real nature of the late Roman / Byzantine economic base, given that it was founded upon the predominance of the colonate or of communities of peasant small-holders, as opposed to slave-worked estates.⁹

The role of the gold coinage in the machinery of the state is crucial in this connection. Coin was issued entirely to serve the needs of this

⁸ Jones, *LRE*, pp. 827 ff., 839-841.

⁹ For the concept of a re-distributive economy, see K. Polanyi, 'The Economy as Instituted Process', in: *Trade and Market in the Early Empires*, edd. K. Polanyi, C.M. Arensburg, H.W. Pearson (Glencoe, Ill. 1957) 243-270, esp. 253-256. For the equilibrium of the peasant household economy, see A.V. Chayanov, *The Theory of Peasant Economy*, edd. D. Thorner, B. Kerblay, R.E.F. Smith (Homewood, Ill. 1966). On this, see B. Kerblay, 'Chayanov and the Theory of Peasantry as a Specific Type of Economy', in: *Peasants and Peasant Societies* (op. cit., note 7 above) 150-160; E. Patlagean, '«Économie paysanne» et «féodalité byzantine»', *Annales E.S.C.* 30 (1975) 1371-1396, esp. 1372 f. For a critique of Polanyi, and of the structuralist approach espoused by Patlagean, see M. Godelier, *Horizon, Trajets Marxistes en Anthropologie* (Paris 1973) pp. 17 ff; *idem*, *Rationality and Irrationality in Economics* (Eng. trans., London 1972) pp. 268 ff., 276 f; S.C. Humphreys, 'History, Economics and Anthropology: the Work of Karl Polanyi', *History and Theory* 8 (1969) 165-212, esp. 183; Y. Garlan, 'L'oeuvre de Polanyi, la place de l'économie dans les sociétés anciennes', *La Pensée* 179 (1973) 118-125; and especially G. Dupré, P.-Ph. Rey, 'Reflections on the Pertinence of a theory of the history of exchange', *Economy and Society* 2/2 (May 1973) 131-163. There is, in addition, of course, the whole question of the concept of a 'surplus' in peasant societies which must remain unexamined here. See Godelier, *Rationality and Irrationality*, pp. 269 ff., and the useful bibliography in the otherwise limited anthology *Peasants*, by E.R. Wolf (Englewood Cliffs, N.J. 1966) pp. 4-10, 110-111. For some further comments, especially on Godelier, see Talal Asad, 'The Concept of Rationality in Economic Anthropology', *Economy and Society* 3 (1974) 211-218.

administrative state structure, to oil its own internal activities. Coins naturally gravitated towards commercial centres, but this was not the aim of their issue. They entered commerce because that already existed; but they were intended primarily to fulfill a monetary and fiscal role. They were a tool and a symbol of the state: transactions were to be carried out in the coin of the state, but any further employment was accidental. The gold issued by the state for these purposes, it also expected to receive back in the form of taxes.¹⁰ The fact that this was so, and indeed that the state demanded the payment of taxes in gold, does of course imply the existence of some sort of market sphere in which agricultural produce, for example, could be exchanged for gold. But this market was itself drawn into the net of state transactions, since it was chiefly the army and the bureaucracy who bought up peasant surpluses - generally at artificially low prices fixed by government statute - and they in turn received their gold directly from the state. Only limited amounts of gold, confined either to elite trade or taken out by hoarding, could elude this re-distributive relationship. Taxation policy was, of course, central to this system.¹¹ While the coins issued, therefore, might well be attracted to commercial centres - towns - the issue had no relation to the commercial demand, but rather to the needs of the administrative machinery of the state - centred, of course, in cities. The smaller denominations in copper and occasionally silver served

¹⁰ Cf. E. Francès, *art. cit.* (note 4 above) 12-13; also the remarks of H. Hunger, *Reich der neuen Mitte* (Graz/Wien 1965) p. 45. On the function of the gold coinage see also M.F. Hendy, *Coinage and Money in the Byzantine Empire 1081-1261* (DOS 12, Washington 1969) pp. 311-312; *idem*, 'Aspects of Coin Production and Fiscal Administration in the Late Roman and Early Byzantine Period', *Numismatic Chronicle*, 7th ser., 12 (1972) 117-139, esp. 135-137; C.M. Cipolla, *Money, Prices and Civilisation in the Mediterranean World* (Princeton, N.J. 1956) p. 26; M. Bloch, 'Le problème de l'or au moyen âge', *Annales E.S.C.* 5 (1933) 1-34. These functions of gold were maintained in the successor kingdoms of the West. See G. Duby, *Guerriers et Paysans, VII^e-XII^e siècle: premier essor de l'économie européenne* (Paris 1973) pp. 79 ff.

¹¹ In general on this, see M. Crawford, *art. cit.* (note 7 above) 45-46; and for taxation policy, G. Ostrogorsky, 'Agrarian Conditions in the Byzantine Empire in the Middle Ages', *CEHE I* (Cambridge 1952) pp. 205-234. To what extent gold actually changed hands at this level is difficult to determine. Much of the peasant produce necessary to support the army may have been collected in kind by local praefectural officials, who received gold in coin from the *optiones* or paymasters of the units in question - who may themselves have it more or less directly from the fisc, bypassing the soldiers, for whom they undertook to purchase the relevant supplies. See Jones, *LRE*, on pay and supplies for this, pp. 626 ff.

the needs of local trade, the gold the needs of the state, and in the process were drawn into the trade in luxury or highly-priced goods. In this respect, Ostrogorsky's argument regarding the Byzantine city must be substantially emended, for he admits that the bronze coinage shows a dramatic falling-off after the 650s and recovered only in the ninth century, whereas issues of gold show no such marked fluctuations.¹² In the light of the foregoing this surely argues against the thesis, based on the presence of gold coins in cities, that they suffered only a limited decline during the seventh and eighth centuries, a thesis which effectively ignores the central role of the state and its needs in relation to the gold. In fact, the presence of gold coins in cities has little to do with the existence or not of a «vital market economy» - it reflects simply the activities of the state and the presence of its civil and military administrative officials. That fines in legal or official documents - notably the Farmer's Law and the *Ecloga* - are reckoned in *nomismata* or fractions thereof does not necessarily reflect the use of the coins themselves.¹³ A stable gold coinage functions as a measure of value in which goods of different sorts can be compared and through which exchange values can be ascertained.¹⁴ The issue and use of a bronze/copper coinage,

¹² On the bronze currency, see Jones, *LRE*, p. 443; *idem*, 'Inflation under the Roman Empire', *Economic History Review* 5 (1953) 293-318 (repr. with additions in Brunt, ed., *op.cit.*, note 7 above, 187-227); Hendy, *Coinage and Money*, p. 5; Cipolla, *op.cit.* (note 10 above) pp. 26 ff; and A. Piganiol, *L'Empire Chrétien (325-395)* (Paris 1947) pp. 294-295. Vryonis' comment, in *The Decline of Medieval Hellenism in Asia Minor and the Process of Islamization from the Eleventh through the Fifteenth Century* (Berkeley/Los Angeles/London 1971) p. 7, to the effect that Byzantium could probably not have survived without a «money-economy» and towns, where «money-economy» is to be understood in the broadest sense, seems to me unjustified. For Ostrogorsky's position vis-à-vis cities, see *Byzantine Cities* (art. cit. note 4 above) 50 ff. Note Patlagean's comments, *Pauvreté économique*, pp. 341 ff., and see De Waha's critical notice, *Byz* 49 (1979) 485-489.

¹³ Pace Ostrogorsky, *Byzantine Cities*, 64.

¹⁴ See Marx, *Capital* i (London/Moscow 1954) pp. 97 f., 100; *idem*, *Grundrisse* (Eng. trans., Harmondsworth 1973) p. 190 f. Wergeld fines were reckoned in a similar way in the Germanic legal codes, cf. J. Werner, 'Fernhandel und Naturalwirtschaft im östlichen Merowingerrreich nach archäologischen und numismatischen Zeugnissen', in: *Moneta e Scambi nell'Alto Medioevo* (Settimane di Studi del Centro Italiano di Studi sull'Alto Medioevo VIII, Spoleto 1960) 557-618, see 557; also K. Polanyi, 'The Semantics of Money-Uses', in: G. Dalton, ed., *Primitive, Archaic and Modern Economies: the Essays of Karl Polanyi* (New York 1968) 175-203; and M. Bloch, 'Économie-nature ou économie-argent: un pseudo-dilemme', *Annales d'Histoire Sociale* 5 (1933) 7-16 (repr. in *idem*, *Mélanges Historiques*, 2 vols. (Paris 1963) ii, pp. 868-877), see 11 f.

however, apparently *did* decline between c. 650 and c. 800 A.D., a phenomenon which may reflect either a considerable reduction in the demand for these denominations and the relevant government response, or the failure of the government to issue enough copper to cover needs - in either case, a reduction in the number of transactions using this as a medium of exchange takes place.¹⁵ The real functional distinction between the gold and the bronze coinages must be emphasised. The latter was a nominal money of account used at a relatively humble level of transaction as a means of exchange, and entirely dependent upon the stability of the gold currency for its acceptability. Fluctuations in the gold - debasement, for example - directly affected the nominal coinage; the same was not the case in reverse. Were an inflation of the bronze to occur, caused perhaps by continued over-issuing, this would not affect the gold coinage, but would certainly confuse the rates at which the bronze could be exchanged for the gold, and thus affect the confidence invested in the nominal coinage adversely.¹⁶ Since it is precisely the latter which reflects the fluctuations in small-scale, daily commercial activity, its absence suggests very strongly an absence of such money-transactions. On the other hand, the fact that issues of gold were maintained demonstrates the role of the state in regulating the distribution of surplus wealth according to its own requirements. It certainly does not reflect the «preponderant role of a money-economy» and a «developed urban economy».¹⁷

¹⁵ Cipolla, *op. cit.* (note 10 above) pp. 10-11; Marx, *Capital* i, pp. 118-125. See R.S. Lopez, *The Role of Trade in the Economic Re-Adjustment of Byzantium in the Seventh Century* (cited note 4 above) 75 and note 1. The scarcity of bronze coins, if not simply a reflection of their lack of intrinsic value and of the choice of collectors, is certainly to be ascribed to a cut-back in the number of coins struck, as Ostrogorsky, *Byzantine Cities*, 50, notes. Such a cut-back may itself reflect a lack of demand. See also Ph. Grierson, *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and the Whittemore Collection* II/1 (Washington 1968) pp. 6-7.

¹⁶ See Hendy, *Coinage and Money*, p. 5; Jones, *LRE*, p. 444; Ph. Grierson, 'Coinage and Money in the Byzantine Empire 498 - c. 1090', in: *Moneta e Scambi* (cited note 14 above) 411-453, see 436-439. Lopez' assumption that the stability of the gold *nomisma* was based on the regular usage of the copper coinage in internal trade is not borne out by the evidence (cf. Grierson, *loc. cit.*); while it also omits the important functional difference between the two coinages, which makes analogies between the role of coinage within modern industrial/commercial economic systems and medieval economies somewhat difficult. For a penetrating critique of such approaches, see Godelier, *Rationality and Irrationality*, pp. 10 ff., 251 ff.

¹⁷ Ostrogorsky, *Byzantine Cities*, 65. Compare also S. Vryonis, 'An Attic Hoard of Byzantine Gold

The question of «money» and «natural» economies is important in this context. As Marc Bloch long ago suggested, the opposition between «natural» and «money», as well as that between «open» and «closed» economies, is to a large extent a misunderstanding of the problem in hand. The opposition «natural - money» is meaningless in the Byzantine case, for here money - coin as a medium of exchange - functioned at two quite different levels. «Money» in coined form was clearly always present where the state was concerned. But local exchange activities could be carried out quite efficiently without this medium.¹⁸ By the same token, an essentially subsistence peasant economy - which is how we must define that of Byzantium - cannot be wholly closed. Local exchange takes place between limited groups, although limited access to extra-local economic activities also exists, usually indirectly in terms of the transfer to the state (or to the landlord) of surplus produce. At the same time, landowners provide some stimulus towards the maintenance of a trade in luxury goods, but since commodity production (production specifically for sale and profit) was also severely limited, neither does this signify an «open» economy in the absolute sense.¹⁹

Coins (668-741) from the Thomas Whittemore Collection and the Numismatic Evidence for the Urban History of Byzantium', *ZRVI* 8/1 (1963) 291-300, see 299, who follows Ostrogorsky. There was no marked increase in the amount of gold coined, however, as Ostrogorsky (52) seems to have thought - see Grierson, *Coinage and Money in the Byzantine Empire*, cited above (note 16).

¹⁸ See M. Bloch, *Économie-nature ou économie-argent* (cited note 14 above); compare the earlier work of H. Van Werweke, 'Économie-nature et économie-argent: une discussion', *Annales d'Histoire Économique et Sociale* 3 (1931) 428-435, reviewing A. Dopsch, *Naturalwirtschaft und Geldwirtschaft in der Weltgeschichte* (Wien 1930). Dopsch raised this problem in a critique of Max Weber's theories on the medieval «natural economy». See A. Dopsch, «Frühmittelalterliche und spätantike Wirtschaft», in: *Verfassungs- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte des Mittelalters. Gesammelte Aufsätze von Alfons Dopsch* (Wien 1928/Aachen 1966) 219-234, see 220, 228; more recently, G. Luzzato, 'Economia monetaria e economia naturale in Occidente nell'alto medioevo', in: *Moneta e Scambi*, 15-32; E. Patlagean, *Pauvreté économique*, pp. 341-346. See also Duby, *Guerriers et paysans*, pp. 62 f; and especially pp. 68-69, who remarks on the importance of the gift as one form of non-commercial but nevertheless economic, socially-determined exchange; also Polanyi, *The Economy as Instituted Process*, pp. 256-257, 262; Piganiol, *L'Empire Chrétien*, pp. 294-300; and Latouche, *The Birth of Western Economy*.

¹⁹ See especially Grierson, 'Commerce in the Dark-Ages: a Critique of the Evidence', *TRHS*, 5th ser., 9 (1959) 123-140; also Duby, *Guerriers et paysans*, pp. 58-59; Jones, *The Greek City*, p. 267 f., and *LRE*, p. 763. Apart from the fact that the hellenistic and Roman concept of profit differed from

For the present argument, then, it will be sufficient to stress the original role of the town in the east Roman world. Cities existed before the Roman state, which came, however, to depend upon them as administrative centres. As long as the city continued to be the focus of local society and especially to attract the attention of the wealthy, it continued to have local importance, and to be a focus of local exchange.²⁰ In this respect, since cities provided physical protection and the facilities for an administrative apparatus, Byzantine society after the middle of the seventh century and up to the tenth century may be qualified in an extremely limited sense as urbanocentric. But the Byzantine economy was definitely *not* urban-based. The cities «survived» because of local social tradition and administrative needs. Their role as local centres of market-exchange, except insofar as many were pre-existing and convenient points of assembly, was more limited than before, for as I shall suggest, the local wealthy were no longer attracted to their towns to the same degree as previously. One point should here be stressed: the continued physical existence and occupation of urban sites tells us little about the changes in economic and social relations which developed during the seventh century and after. The building of city fortifications, the disappearance of extra-mural suburbs and the reduction in size and scale of urban settlements is only to be expected in the conditions prevailing in the seventh century.²¹ That these urban settlements continued to exist in a physical form shows only that part of the local population may have continued to regard defended areas as safer than the open countryside, and that fortified settlements continued to act as administrative and ecclesiastical centres - which we should surely find not unusual.

that of today (once again raising the problematic of culture-specific economic «rationality» discussed from a relativist and functionalist point of view by Godelier - see Asad's critique, *Economy and Society* 3 (1974) 211 f.) - see Jones, *LRE*, p. 773 f. - conspicuous profit-making in a local/social context was difficult. Only a merchant not related to the community he exploits, or a landlord in times of dearth, could make a profit by re-selling at inflated prices. See Godelier, *Horizon. Trajets Marxistes* (op. cit., note 9 above) p. 290 f., and Patlagean, *Pauvreté économique*, pp. 343-344.

²⁰ For the city as a basic administrative unit, see Jones, *LRE*, pp. 712-713; *The Greek City*, pp. 147-148; and for the city as a focus of social and therefore exchange activity, see Kirsten, *Die byz. Stadt*, 10 f., and Claude, *Die byz. Stadt im 6. Jhdt.*, 181, 186-187.

²¹ Points elaborated but not developed in D. Abrahamse, *Hagiographic Sources for Byzantine Cities* (Ann Arbor 1967) pp. 94-95, 100 f., 136-137, 331-346; see also Kirsten, *Die byz. Stadt*, 20 f.

Likewise, the decline in the number of finds of copper/bronze denominations points to a decline in their use as an exchange medium; but this does not, of course, imply a decline in exchange as such.²² As mentioned above, few peasant households can be entirely self-supporting; but while money facilitates exchange between socially unrelated persons (and is therefore necessary at large markets or where luxury goods are exchanged),²³ it is not vital within a context of localised social relationships, where exchange is regulated by immediate needs or by the interests of mutually dependent social groups.²⁴ That this exchange *could* take place in towns does not affect the fact that the latter continued to be entirely dependent upon their hinterland, and that the majority of local citizens not working within the imperial administrative framework were either owners of or workers upon the land. The surplus which wealthy owners of land and *curiales* of the principate had invested in their cities because they were socially central was now diverted to obtaining titles and influence at Constantinople.

For a fundamental change in the relationship between city and state had occurred. The cities were no longer centres of self-governing administrative regions responsible for providing both their own and imperial revenues.²⁵ This has long been recognised, but it needs to be emphasised, since much of the civic pride typical of the earlier epoch came from just this role, attracting as a consequence much of the wealth which was evident in classical and hellenistic cities, both from local market and industrial activities. By the seventh century, cities were becoming merely the seats of administrative establishments which regulated the surrounding regions and which served to transfer revenue extracted from the local population direct to the state or to its

²² See note 15 above. A contrast between «economic» in terms of people's relation to their environment and the provision of their needs; and in terms of commercial transactions, should be carefully drawn. For an attempt to define the «economic» in an analytically useful way, ie. in the former sense, see Godelier, *Rationality and Irrationality*.

²³ See Marx, *Capital*, i, pp. 110, 113 f., 116.

²⁴ Duby, *Guerriers et paysans*, p. 77; Polanyi, *The Economy as Instituted Process*, 258; also Jones, *The Greek City*, p. 260; and Patlagean, *Pauvreté économique*, pp. 184 ff., 343-344, for an interesting, if sometimes debateable account of gift-exchange.

²⁵ Jones, *The Greek City*, pp. 148 ff., 267 f.; *LRE*, pp. 758-760; Fran̄ces, *art. cit.* (note 4 above) 5-10; Kirsten, *Die byz. Stadt*, 23.

military and administrative organs.²⁶ The reasons are complex, but reflect essentially the growing conflict between state, cities and landowners to extract surpluses from the agricultural labour force; and the inability of the cities to retain control over their own incomes in the face of fierce competition within the landowning class. The expansion of the state bureaucracy, a result of the efforts of the central administration to extend and to consolidate its control over the available resources, also conflicted with the interests of the corporate *civitates*. And as the cities lost ground to the imperial administration, so they also lost the support of the local landowning class which had been their mainstay. The state now arranged its own fiscal affairs and the cities lost their once central fiscal function. City buildings important to the state were now maintained by the latter, defences being frequently first on the list.²⁷ The cities as corporate bodies lost their lands and had henceforth no claim upon the surpluses extracted from the territories around them, which were appropriated as far as possible by the state or by private landowners. The state simply by-passed the cities.²⁸ The economic and administrative ties which formerly had bound the cities to their *territoria* were broken, a process which was itself encouraged by the inability of the *curiales* - under increasing pressure from the state - adequately to provide for the imperial revenues.²⁹ During the seventh century, the city as a corporate institution finally lost its historic role as the foundation of the imperial provincial administrative

²⁶ Kirsten, *Die byz. Stadt*, 26; and especially G.L. Kurbatov, *Osnovnye problemy vnutrennego razvitiya vizantiiskogo goroda v IV-VII vv.* (Leningrad 1971) pp. 154 ff; also A. Guillou, 'Transformations des structures socio-économiques dans le monde byzantin du VI^e au VIII^e siècle', *ZRVI* 19 (1980) 71-78, see 71-72. For a valuable analysis of other aspects of this process, see especially E. Patlagean, 'La pauvreté à Byzance au temps de Justinien: les origines d'un modèle politique', *Études sur l'histoire de la pauvreté (Moyen Âge - XVI^e siècle)* i (Paris 1974) 59-81, esp. 62 f., 67. (repr. in *eadem*, *Structure sociale, famille, chrétienté à Byzance* (London, Variorum 1981) I.

²⁷ Kirsten, *Die byz. Stadt*, 20.

²⁸ See Jones, *LRE*, pp. 758 ff; Abrahamse, *op. cit.* (note 21 above) pp. 142 ff. Note also Tinnefeld, *Die frühbyzantinische Gesellschaft* (München 1977) pp. 164 ff., 214-215.

²⁹ Jones, *The Greek City*, pp. 148-151; *LRE*, pp. 758-759; and W. Liebenam, *Städteverwaltung im römischen Kaiserreiche* (Leipzig 1900/Amsterdam 1967) pp. 476 ff. for the beginnings of the process; also H. Aubin, 'Vom Absterben antiken Lebens im Frühmittelalter', in: *Kulturbruch oder Kulturkontinuität von der Antike zum Mittelalter*, ed. P.E. Hübinger (Darmstadt 1968) 203-258, see 213-215 (the article first appeared in *Antike und Abendland* 3 (1948) 88-119).

organisation, being replaced first by a salaried bureaucracy and then by a series of centrally-maintained cadasters or tax-lists.³⁰ It was to be expected under such circumstances that the local wealthy lost interest in their cities as institutions, for these urban agglomerations were no longer the focal point of social and economic power. They were often the seat of local administrative officials, but these were appointed by the central government, or at least by higher officials of that government based locally, and received both their income and their status from this source.³¹ At best, cities of this sort provided an entrance-card to the centre. The city thus lost not only its economic and corporate personality, but also much of its social attraction. In the later seventh, the eighth and the ninth century and after, the wealthy sent their sons to Constantinople to be educated, strove for titles and honours endowed by the imperial court, and cultivated patrons within the ruling bureaucracy in order to obtain posts, sinecures and influence. Of course, the presence of an imperial administrative apparatus within a city provided a certain social stimulant, possibly drawing some of the local wealthy, as status and honours were won through the bureaucratic establishment as a whole. This factor may well have aided many «towns», if not economically, in the uncertain climate of the period under consideration, then at least in terms of their continued physical identity. But the presence of a few administrators and a handful of wealthier locals in a city, while it may have attracted a degree of commercial activity and possibly some luxury trade, remained on the whole - as far as the evidence permits us to say - a marginal phenomenon that did not affect the region as a whole.³²

If cities survived physically during the period c.650-c.900 it was

³⁰ Kirsten, *Die byz. Stadt*, 26; Z.V. Udal'cova, K.A. Osipova, 'Otlitčitelnie čerti feodal'nikh otnoshenii v Vizantii', *VV* 36 (1974) 3-31, esp. 29 f.

³¹ See Abrahamse, *op. cit.*, p. 145 f. and Kirsten, *Die byz. Stadt*, 26.

³² For the attraction exercised by Constantinople upon the provincial population, see Hunger, *Reich der neuen Mitte* (cited note 10 above) p. 42 f.; and F. Winkelmann, in: *Byzanz im 7. Jahrhundert: Untersuchungen zur Herausbildung des Feudalismus* (Berlin 1978) pp. 182-183. Note also Abrahamse, *op. cit.*, p. 193 f., and Kirsten, *Die byz. Stadt*, 23. Numerous hagiographies of the later eighth, ninth and tenth century illustrate the tendency in the clearest terms.

For the limited effect of elite trade upon provincial city economies, see Jones, *The Greek City*, pp. 260 ff. Každan, in his review of Foss (see note 4 above) rightly stresses that the decline of Byzant-

because they offered some shelter to both people and their possessions and - much more significantly - provided useful bases for local imperial administrators, both civil and military.³³ Any economic role they may have played - in terms of a local market, for example - was peripheral to, and derived from, the economic activity and social life of the region as a whole, and reflected on the one hand the fiscal and administrative operations of the state and on the other the degree of exchange activity in the countryside, not vice versa.

This picture is, of course, rather generalised, and leaves out the larger *emporion* and administrative centres of the empire - Ephesos, Trebizond, Constantinople itself, and so on. Here, the trade in luxury goods overland, and maritime commerce (when not placed in a strait-jacket by the state) could flourish, for here were centres where either the administrative bureaucracy was based, or which were less exposed to attack and at the same time situated on international trade routes.³⁴ In such centres, local industry had a good market and a limited extension of petty commodity production could take place. But even such centres as these were dependent upon either their agricultural hinterlands for foodstuffs or upon state-subsidised imports which the majority of the poor city population could not otherwise have afforded. Constantinople itself had its local representatives of the landowning class, whose estates were vital to the city's supplies. It must also be borne in mind that the uncertain situation in the countryside, especially in the

tine cities is to be seen in terms of dynamic shifts within the overall structure of the late Roman social formation, shifts which external attacks and pressures merely exacerbated. See G.L. Kurbatov, *op. cit.* (note 26 above) for the loss of municipal functions and property during the sixth and seventh centuries.

³³ Kirsten, *Die byz. Stadt*, 26-29. Ahrweiler, 'L'Asie Mineure et les invasions arabes', *Revue Historique* 227 (1962) 28-29, is over-optimistic in claiming that the reinforcement of town populations through refugees led to an upswing in the fortunes of those towns involved. There is no evidence for this in the period in question.

³⁴ Compare Ahrweiler, *L'Asie Mineure et les invasions arabes*, 29-30, who postulates a transfer of the focus of trade to the Black Sea coast and to the west coast of Asia Minor as a result of the disruption caused by Arab attacks. International luxury commerce thus became more centralised, passing through only those cities where physical safety and a sure market could be found. The argument is not implausible, although the evidence is difficult to assess. See also Kirsten's remarks, *Die byz. Stadt*, 31.

areas most exposed to hostile raids, probably meant a decline in agricultural production, which would in turn have made the existence of a large, non-productive population in the majority of cities very difficult.³⁵

The «city» of the seventh, eighth and early ninth centuries, thus had little social or economic relevance to the needs of the Byzantine state; it had become simply a convenient site for provincial administrators and regional garrison troops. Had they not already existed, there seems no reason to doubt that the army and the administration would have built similar fortified centres for the same purposes.³⁶

In view of these developments and the nature of the military situation in the seventh-ninth centuries, it is hardly surprising that cities which had been important often fell into insignificance. Towns such as Miletos, Akroinon, Pergamon, Sardis, Ankara, Kotyaion, Seleukeia, Sision, Mopsouestia and many others took on the aspect of closed, defended fortress-villages. In the Balkans, only Thessaloniki seems to have retained any importance as a «town», and even here the population was predominantly agricultural. Recent surveys suggest that those cities which did survive - physically - were reduced effectively to shelters for the local rural populace, defended villages with no real urban

³⁵ Ibn al-Fakīh, *Description of the Land of the Byzantines*, trans. E.W. Brooks, 'Arabic Lists of Byzantine Themes', *JHS* 21 (1901) 72-73. Cf. J.L. Teall, 'The Grain Supply of the Byzantine Empire', *DOP* 13 (1959) 87-139, see 124. For depopulation, see note 54 below.

³⁶ The retention of the word *polis* to describe cities - as opposed to *phrourion/kastron* - pointed out by Abrahamse, *op. cit.*, pp. 92-94, if it is not an archaism on the part of hagiographers, means only that the (Greek-speaking) subjects of the empire were aware to some extent of the tradition behind the city, and continued to use the traditional term for such sites. That fortresses and «cities» cannot be so readily distinguished one from the other is clear from the Arab writers. Cf. Ibn Khurdādhbih, who describes the Roman provinces as having numerous fortresses (ḥuṣūn). Ibn al-Fakīh likewise mentions the many «strong fortresses». Undoubtedly, we should include many *poleis* under this definition, but the point is that to an outsider towns or cities such as Ankara or Caesarea were reduced to the status of fortresses. It is unfortunately this very use of the word «city», adopted by modern historians from the Greek sources, which has confused the issue. See note 43 below. The long-overdue abrogation by Leo VI of the remaining senatorial and curial rights attached to civic autonomy aptly sums up the irrelevance of this institution to the social formation which developed during the sixth century and after. See Ostrogorsky, *Byzantine Cities*, 65-66.

economic identity whatsoever.³⁷

In Anatolia, few cities were really safe. Both Caesarea and Tyana, for example, were taken on various occasions - Tyana was held and garrisoned by the Arabs during the reign of al-Ma'mūn, having lain deserted since the early eighth century - and indeed attracted enough attention to make them undesirable as military and administrative headquarters.³⁸ It is interesting that Koron, the headquarters of the *Kleisourarchia* of Cappadocia, was not alone in being situated in a well-fortified position and not on the site of any previously flourishing city. Charsianon Kastron and the headquarters of the Anatolikon theme, Marj aš-Šam (Amorion was abandoned as theme headquarters for many years after its destruction in 838 and had anyway in late Roman times been a rather small and unimportant town of inferior status) are good examples.³⁹ The conditions which encouraged this tendency to move administrative centres are reflected in the Acts of the Quinisext council of 692, which refers to clerics abandoning their cities, the difficulty of convening diocesan synods, and similar prob-

³⁷ See Kirsten, *Die byz. Stadt*, 20, 28 f; also the work of C. Foss cited in note 4 above. On the Balkans, see, for example, the comments of G. Gomolka, in: *Studien zum 7. Jahrhundert in Byzanz: Probleme der Herausbildung des Feudalismus* (BBA 47, Berlin 1976) 35-42.

³⁸ See Lilie, *Die byzantinische Reaktion auf die Ausbreitung der Araber* (Miscellanea Byzantina Monacensia 22, München 1976) pp. 63-178 for a catalogue of raids. Caesarea was taken at least twice (646 and 726) and was the named object of several other attacks, eg. in 655, 729, 732; its hinterland will almost certainly have been raided for more often than is explicitly mentioned. The same can be said of most cities in central, eastern and southern Anatolia - as Lilie's survey would suggest, see *Die byz. Reaktion*, loc. cit. Nearer the frontier, Tyana suffered also - its whole population was captured and enslaved in 707/8. Cf. *Theophanes* (De Boor), p. 377, ¹⁰⁻¹². It, or rather the region around it, was attacked again in 739/40, when a vast booty is reported to have fallen into the hands of the raiders. See *Theoph.*, p. 411, ¹⁰⁻¹² and Lilie, *op. cit.*, p. 152. For Tyana fortified by Ma'mūn, see Vasiliev, *Byzance et les Arabes* i (Bruxelles 1935) p. 121.

The lists of signatories at the various ecumenical councils of this period (680, 692, 787) are of little use in determining which cities were still held by the Byzantines, or indeed whether they were occupied at all. Bishops were still appointed to dioceses even when an area was outside Byzantine-controlled territory; and would certainly have been appointed where a town lay within Byzantine territory but deserted. See Haldon/Kennedy, *Arab-Byzantine Frontier* (cited note 1 above) 95.

³⁹ For Marj aš-Šam, see Ibn al-Fakīh, 74; and Brooks, 'The Campaign of 716-718 from Arabic Sources', *JHS* 19 (1899) 19-33, see 31.

lems;⁴⁰ while the evidence of chronicles and other accounts of the warfare between Byzantine and Arab forces paints a clear picture of devastation and the abandonment of the more exposed urban settlements in favour of less accessible sites. The remnants of the population of Tyana probably moved permanently to the better-fortified Magida (Niğde); that of Faustinoupolis to the small stronghold of Loulon; while other «cities», in the frontier districts especially, survived only if they were very easily defended or infrequently visited by raiding troops. Podandos and Rodendon, for example, in lesser Cappadocia, survived as small, fortress-settlements, as did Kyzistra. Kiskisos was also a small, fortified settlement, and owed its survival - if it remained in Byzantine hands at all - to its out-of-the-way situation. Nyssa was reduced to a small military establishment only, it would seem, at least by the time its fortifications were razed by a passing Arab force in 838. The list could be continued.⁴¹

The comments of the Muslim geographers are important. Even after the empire had recovered from the worst effects of these raids, a tenth-century Persian writer could say of it: 'In the days of old, cities were numerous in Rûm, but now they have become few. Most of the districts are prosperous and pleasant, and have (each) an extremely strong fortress, on account of the frequency of the raids which the fighters for the faith direct upon them. To each village appertains a castle, where in time of flight (they may take shelter)'.⁴² Whatever the citizens of the empire thought about their *poleis*, it is clear that an outsider

⁴⁰ See Mansi, *Sacrorum Conciliorum nova et amplissima collectio* (Florence 1759-1798) xi., canon viii, 945; canon xviii, 952.

⁴¹ See F. Hild, *Das byzantinische Strassensystem in Kappadokien* (Wien 1977) (Veröffentlichungen der Kommission für die Tabula Imperii Byzantini, 2 [Denkschriften der Österr. Akad. d. Wiss., phil.-hist. Klasse 131]) p. 46 for the fate of Tyana; for Faustinoupolis, *ibid.* p. 52; and for the smaller towns/fortresses, see pp. 55-56, 121, 124-125, 127; and for Nyssa, see *La Chronique de Michel le Syrien, Patriarche Jacobite d'Antioche*, éd. et trad. J.B. Chabot (Paris 1899-1905) iii, p. 95 and Vasilev, *Byzance et les Arabes*, i, p. 152. On all these, see now F. Hild, M. Restle, *Tabula Imperii Byzantini II: Kappadokien (Kappadokia, Charsianon, Sebasteia u. Lykandos)* (Wien 1981) (Denkschriften d. Österr. Akad. d. Wiss., phil.-hist. Klasse 149).

⁴² *Hudūd al-'Ālam, The Regions of the World*, tr. V. Minorsky (Oxford 1937) pp. 156-157. Teall, 'The Grain Supply of the Byzantine Empire, 330-1025', *DOP* 13 (1959) 109-117, has tried to minimise the importance of this passage, I think incorrectly, see 127.

did not regard most of them as cities like Baghdad or Damascus, or even Constantinople, which were centres of commerce and industry. The writer in question is only too willing to admit the existence of «numerous towns, villages, castles, fortresses, mountains, running water and amenities».⁴³ But the «towns» are clearly not cities in the writer's view, merely small defended settlements, the word generally used to describe them being «ḥiṣn» (fortress) as opposed to «madīnah» (city). The impression is one of a completely rural society with many fortresses and villages, few real cities. This view is reinforced when we read what the Arab geographer Ibn Ḥawqal has to say: «Rich cities are few in their (ie. the Byzantines') kingdom and country, despite its situation, size and the length of their rule. This is because most of it consists of mountains, castles (qilā'), fortresses (ḥuṣūn), cave dwellings and villages dug out of the rock or buried under the earth». Ibn Ḥawqal has a good deal more to say about the poor state of the Byzantine empire. The picture he draws here does not give one the impression of a state full of thriving cities and a «money economy». The comments of Ṭabarī referring to Ankara and Amorion in 838 - «...there was nothing in the land of the Byzantines greater than these two cities» - illustrates vividly the real situation, for archaeological surveys show that Ankara was at this time little more than a heavily-defended fortress, hardly a city in the classical (political/economic) sense. Referring to a campaign of 831 in Cappadocia, the same chronicler notes that abū Ishāq, Ma'mūn's son, took thirty fortresses and maṭmūra, or underground grainstores. Hild's recent survey of the Cappadocian road-system describes many such fortresses - small watch-towers and fortlets dotted along the chief routes leading into imperial territory. But Ṭabarī refers to no cities.⁴⁴

⁴³ *Ibid.* The difference between «town», «city» and «village» is important in Muslim terminology - see G. von Grunebaum, «The Structure of the Muslim Town», in: *Islam: Essays in the Nature and Growth of a Cultural Tradition* (London 1961) 141-158, esp. 141-142 (repr. in *idem, Islam and Medieval Hellenism: Social and Cultural Perspectives* (London, Variorum 1976). Arab writers are careful to differentiate between «towns» and «fortresses» in Muslim territory. The fact that they refer to Byzantine «cities» as fortresses or castles (ḥuṣūn, qilā') deserves to be emphasised, and suggests the real nature of these so-called «cities».

⁴⁴ Ibn Ḥawqal, *Kitāb Surāt al-Ard, Configuration de la Terre*, tr. J. H. Kramer, G. Wiet (Beyrouth/Paris 1964) p. 194 (text, ed. J. H. Kramer [Leiden 1938] p. 200). The treatise was compiled c. 977 A.D. For Ṭabarī and the archaeological evidence which puts his comments in their proper context,

The tenth-century treatise *De Velitatione Bellica* adds to the picture drawn by Muslim writers of the wide frontier zone. On the Byzantine «side» is a land of fortresses and villages; and these borderlands comprised in effect a great part of Anatolia.⁴⁵ If the situation of the tenth century as so described is to be accepted, then it can scarcely have been much different in the preceding two hundred years; and it is not unreasonable to suggest that a considerable part of Asia Minor was the same, a land where the once-flourishing cities of the previous era were reduced for the most part to the status of defended villages and refuges for the administration and local populace in times of danger, or completely abandoned in favour of safer locations.⁴⁶ Only those cities or urban centres situated on major trade routes in the north and west were excepted, and they were not numerous.

Life in those provinces most exposed to hostile military activity must have been difficult and uncertain. The constant presence of imperial administrative officials was a reminder that they were still part of a greater state. However, the akritic cycle demonstrates only too clearly the isolation of the more remote districts and the resulting local self-sufficiency which grew up,⁴⁷ a point emphasised in the so-called *Strategikon* of the eleventh-century general Kekaumenos, where a well-developed local self-reliance typical of the provinces and more particularly of the provincial military is exemplified.⁴⁸

see Foss, *Late Antique and Byzantine Ankara* (art. cit., note 4 above) 78; and for Abū Ishāq, see Vasiliev, *Byzance et les Arabes*, i, p. 289. For Hild's survey see note 41 above.

⁴⁵ The treatise gives a vivid picture of the nature of the terrain and warfare waged in the frontier districts. See 197,⁷⁶⁴, 215,⁷⁻¹³, 244,⁷⁶⁴, etc. (ed. C.B. Hase, in: *Leonis Diaconi... Historiae* [Bonn]).

⁴⁶ See Ahrweiler, *L'Asie Mineure et les invasions arabes*, 32. For the effects of constant warfare and raiding upon the cities, see *Mansi*, xi, canon xxxvii, 960.

⁴⁷ H.-G. Beck, *Das byzantinische Jahrtausend* (München 1978) p. 85; and see the general introduction to J. Mavrogordato, *Digenes Akritas* (Oxford 1956), pp. lxi f. Most recently, see H.F. Graham, 'Digenis Akritas as a Source for Frontier History', *Actes du XIV^e Congrès International des Etudes Byzantines* (Bucarest 1975) ii, 321-329.

⁴⁸ Cf. Kekaumenos, ed. G.G. Litavrin (*Sov'eti i rasskazi Kekavmena: sočinenie vizantiiskogo polkovodtsa XI veka* [Moscow 1972]) p. 166,⁷⁶⁴, 168,²¹⁶⁴. See also H.-G. Beck, *Vademecum des byzantinischen Aristokraten: das sog. Strategikon vom Kekaumenos* (Graz 1956) p. 5 f.

It is these military commanders who formed an important section of the new Byzantine aristocracy which came into being during the later part of the seventh century, in a situation which gave to local officials with delegated authority a great deal more power and influence than before, and made possible the rise of a whole new group of officials to social wealth through imperial service.⁴⁹ This development must likewise have emphasised the reduction in the relevance of the cities as sources and centres of social, political and economic power. The reliance of the threatened local populace, both urban and rural, on the military, increased proportionally as hostile military activity intensified. Military officers controlled fortresses and refuges, the agricultural population had to rely upon them for defence and security, and the soldiers themselves were recruited from this very population. It seems not unlikely that an entrenched system of patronage developed, and it is precisely this which made possible the rise of the later military aristocratic families which can be identified by the ninth century, and which is to some extent reflected in the legislation of the tenth-century emperors.⁵⁰

⁴⁹ Parallels between these Byzantine aristocrats and their western counterparts exist. Unlike the westerners, the Byzantine representatives of this class often lived in «cities»; but that does not mean that they did not occupy a position similar structurally to that of the westerners, for in the East the towns were the centres of the administrative and military authority upon which their landed wealth was ultimately founded. But these «towns» and fortresses could fulfill the function of estate or manorial centres to only a limited extent, since they were also centres of activity for those not dependent upon the military officers/magnates. There is evidence of non-administrative centres too, however: the estates of Eustathios Maleinos in Cappadocia seem not to have been centred around any urban settlement (cf. *Cedrenus*, Bonn, ii, p. 448, ⁹⁻¹⁶) - even in the fourth century certain senatorial families in Cappadocia possessed fortified villas on their estates. Cf. B. Treucker, *Politische und sozialgeschichtliche Studien zu den Basiliius-Briefen* (Frankfurt/München 1961) p. 15. On the origins of the seventh-century 'service' aristocracy, see also G. Litavrin, *Kak žili vizantiicy* (Moscow 1974) esp. 45 f.

⁵⁰ Cf. I. Djurić, 'La famille des Phocas', *ZRVI* 17 (1976) 195-291 (French résumé 293-296), who points out that it was in the distant provinces, such as Cappadocia and Charsianon, that the military families had their roots. See also S. Vryonis, 'Byzantium: the Social Basis of Decline', *GRBS* 2 (1959) 161. On other families, see Jean-F. Vannier, *Familles Byzantines: Les Argyroi (IX^e-XII^e siècles)* (Paris 1975) pp. 16, 19 f., and W. Seibt, *Die Skleroi: eine prosopographisch-sigillographische Studie* (Wien 1976) p. 20 f. From a general reading of Kekaumenos we may suppose a considerable degree of patronage on the part of the local magnates in the provinces. The well-known novel of Constantine VII on the military lands (*JGR* [Zepos] i, p. 222 f.) refers to the possibility and the practice of soldiers being il-

Other factors, more directly connected with the effects of Arab raiding in Anatolia, for example, may also have facilitated the growth of large estates in the hands of these military families. Constant insecurity affects arable farming communities much more drastically than those which rely upon a chiefly pastoral economy. Fields which were regularly burned, crops which were harvested or destroyed by a marauding enemy, cannot have offered a secure income to those living in those regions. Indeed, the example of the population of the town of Sision, who decided to abandon their town for safer districts in 711, while it is difficult to say whether or not it was generally followed, demonstrates the effects such raiding had on the local morale and on the local economy.⁵¹ In the heart of Anatolia, the lot of the population of Euchaita was hardly better. Plagued by yearly raids, their city was so badly handled that they eventually decided to abandon it for safer territory. Only the presence of the cult of St. Theodore Tiro and the occurrence of a timely miracle dissuaded them.⁵² The account of these miracles, which appears to describe events of the later seventh and early eighth centuries, provides a vivid account of what life in regularly plundered districts was really like—yearly raids, constant insecurity, and the presence of the citadel or fortress dominating the original settlement.⁵³

As Ahrweiler has already suggested, those areas most exposed to attack were very probably progressively depopulated as life on a reasonably secure basis became more and more difficult.⁵⁴ We may

legally exempted from military duties and serving their officers in another capacity. See P. Lemerle, 'Esquisse pour une histoire agraire de Byzance', *Revue Historique* 220 (1958) 48 f.

⁵¹ Cf. *al-Balādhuri, Kitāb Futūh al-Buldān (The Origins of the Islamic State)*, trans. P. K. Hitti (London 1916/Beirut 1966) p. 262 (text ed. S. Munajjid, *al-Balādhuri, Futūh al-Buldān* (Cairo 1957), see p. 201); and Lilie's comments (*op. cit.* note 38 above) p. 119 and note 50.

⁵² See *Vita et miracula Theodori*, in: H. Delehay, *Les légendes grecques des saints militaires* (Paris 1909) 198, 28-31.

⁵³ See *ibid.*, 199, 23-24, 200, 5. See on this also Abrahamse, *op. cit.*, pp. 347-354.

⁵⁴ Ahrweiler, *L'Asie Mineure et les invasions arabes*, 28 f. See also P. Charanis, 'The Linguistic Frontier in Asia Minor towards the End of the Ninth Century', *Actes du XIV^e Congrès International des Études Byzantines*, ii, 315-319, see 316, note 6. The references to a movement away from the threatened regions in the canons of the Quinisext council already mentioned are unmistakable. See notes 40, 46 above; and cf. *Mansi*, xi, canon xxxix, 961. For the effects of constant raiding in the Bal-

legitimately assume that considerable areas were thus affected; and while attempts were made, often on a huge scale, to re-inforce the population of Asia Minor, it is doubtful that this was enough to turn the tide - the necessity of repeating such moves is evidence enough for this.⁵⁵ The local military establishment, more specifically the leading officers, was probably the only group which could assert itself and maintain its interests under such conditions, at least once they had become established in the districts concerned. They disposed not only of the necessary resources, but in addition the armed force required to protect the areas in question - and to intimidate local opposition where necessary. Abandoned land fell theoretically to the imperial government, either to the general *logothesion* or to the emperor's private estate, once the community involved was no longer able to pay its taxes collectively (before the end of the ninth century - the system appears to have changed at this time). But it might equally have come under the «protection» of military officials or members of the local administration before its final abandonment, or before the agents of the fisc could register it officially as deserted. Cheap land in exposed districts can hardly have been scarce, and there would have been no lack of opportunity for officials to buy it up or to otherwise appropriate it - regard-

kans, see the summary of Gomolka (*art. cit.* note 37 above), esp. 41-42.

⁵⁵ For the extent of the devastated area in Anatolia, see, eg. Lilie, *Die byz. Reaktion*, pp. 227 ff; and for re-settlement in parts of Asia Minor, see P. Charanis, 'Ethnic Changes in the seventh Century in Byzantium', *DOP* 13 (1959) 23-44; and *idem*, 'The Transfer of Population as a Policy in the Byzantine Empire', *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 3/2 (1961) 143 ff. For a more recent comment, see H. Ditten, in: *Byzanz im 7. Jhdt.* (*op. cit.*, note 32 above) pp. 151-155; and *idem*, 'Slawen im byzantinischen Heer von Justinian I bis Justinian II', in: *Studien zum 7. Jhdt.* (*op. cit.* note 37 above) 77 ff. Compare the *Apokalypse des Ps.-Methodius*, ed. A. Lolos (Köln/Meisenheim 1976) (Beiträge zur klass. Philologie 83), written c. 655 and later revised. It gives an exaggerated but still useful picture of the impact of the Muslim raids, a picture which is in part at least supported by the canons of the council of 692 already quoted. See xi, 9 and 17. Whatever the position of the towns of Anatolia in the tenth century and later (see Vryonis, *Decline of Medieval Hellenism*, *op. cit.*, note 12 above, pp. 17-22; and Každan in *Byz.* 49 (1979) 498 f.), when they were once more safe from raiding and when local trade could be carried on in reasonable safety, such was hardly the case during the seventh century and much of the eighth. The extensive evidence amassed by Vryonis for the effects of Turkish raiding during the later eleventh and twelfth century might be usefully employed to demonstrate the effects of this sort of hostile military activity upon agriculture. See *Decline of Medieval Hellenism*, p. 144 f.

less of the theoretical prohibitions on such activities.⁵⁶ While there is little clear evidence of this, local officials, especially military commanders, certainly possessed the resources to impose their will on less fortunate members of the community. Possibly they concentrated upon a less risky form of economic exploitation -cattle- and sheep-raising - which requires less manpower and constituted a more secure use of resources, since herds and flocks are more easily, and much more quickly, brought into safety. This may have been the case in Cappadocia, for example, and Charsianon. The monk Michael Maleinos distributed his moveable possessions to the poor, who appear to have been livestock farmers of one sort or another, since this consisted chiefly of flocks of sheep and herds of cattle.⁵⁷ These areas were already centres of a pastoral or herding economy, of course, and Cappadocia, for example, was well-known from Roman times to have produced horses from the imperial stud-farms there.⁵⁸ But it is not impossible that the Arab raids encouraged an extension of this pastoral economy, while at the same time giving the local military officials the opportunity to build up their own landed possessions.

⁵⁶ For the procedure followed in such cases, see Lemerle, *Esquisse* (part one, *Revue Historique* 219 [1958]) 60-61, 263. See in addition Ahrweiler, 'Recherches sur l'administration de l'empire byzantin aux IX^e-XI^e siècles', *Bulletin de Correspondance Hellénique* 84 (1960) 1-109, esp. 13 ff. For the ways in which military patronage operated in Syria, for example, during the fourth and fifth centuries, see R.M. Price, *The Role of Military Men in Syria and Egypt from Constantine to Theodosius II* (Oxford D. Phil., 1974) esp. p. 104 f. See also D. Angelov, 'Zur Frage des Agrargesetzes und der Herausbildung der Feudalverhältnisse in Byzanz', in: *Studien zum 7. Jhdt.* (see note 37 above) 3-9, esp. 7-8; and most recently H. Köpstein, in: *Byzanz im 7. Jhdt.* (see note 32 above) p. 40 f., and esp. 50-53 for the development of social subordination reflected in the «Farmers' Law». Even in the tenth century, barbarian raids were seen officially as a cause of abandonment of lands. See M. Loos, 'Quelques remarques sur les communautés rurales et la grande propriété terrienne à Byzance (VII^e-XI^e siècles)', *BS* 39 (1978) 13. Already in the later sixth century the state had begun to delegate substantial fiscal and administrative duties to local landowners (including the Church), as Guillou has suggested. See *transformations des structures* (art. cit., note 26 above) 73-74.

⁵⁷ 'Vie de S. Michel Maleinos', ed. L. Petit, *Revue de l'Orient Chrétien* 7 (1902) 557, 114.

⁵⁸ Strabo, *Geographica* xii, 2.7-9, describes the area about Tyana as fairly fertile, contrasting it with the arid and stony plains about Caesarea. But he adds that the latter region has good pasture. On this, see Kirsten, *Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum* ii (1954) art. «Cappadocia», col. 869 f. For the studfarms, see Jones, *LRE* pp. 767-769.

The eclipse of the hellenistic/Roman urbanocentric economy was a long-drawn-out process, however, and the barbarian raids and attacks of the later sixth and seventh century mark merely the last, and closing, phase of its history. For the city as an integral functional component of a whole system of economic relations was not alone in its transformation - I have concentrated on it because it seems to me to have been symptomatic of a radical shift throughout the whole of the late Roman economic and political system, a shift which was already well under way during the fifth century, and which involved both the relationship between central government and the provinces and that between landowners/landholders, those who worked the land, and the state. The argument has been elaborated elsewhere and the course of events described in detail; it need not detain us here. What is important is the fact that if the gradual decline of urban centres from the third century on is symptomatic of substantive shifts within the structure of east Mediterranean social and economic relationships, then their demise in the course of the seventh century marks the final stage of a process through which Roman society becomes «Byzantine». I do not intend any teleology here, but wish merely to emphasise an approach that sees the social formation of the third to the sixth century as developing, rather than viewing the seventh century as a clean break between late Roman and Byzantine.

So far, my account has been more descriptive than analytic. But having outlined the nature and form of some aspects of the transformation which took place, we can now legitimately ask what sort of society the word «Byzantine» describes, and we inevitably face the question once more of whether or not Byzantine society is, or ever became, «feudal».⁵⁹ A rigorous analysis of the relations of production of the

⁵⁹ The question is, of course, not new, and has exercised the minds of Byzantinists in both East and West. See, for example, A.P. Každan, Z.V. Udal'cova, 'Nouveaux travaux de savants soviétiques sur l'histoire économique et sociale de Byzance (1958-1960)', *Byz* 31 (1961) 189-207, and the bibliography in Z.V. Udal'cova, G.G. Litavrin, 'Sovietskoe Vizantinovedenie v 1955-1960 gg.', *VV* 23 (1963) 3-79; also Pigulevskaya, Lipšic, Siuziumov, Každan, 'Gorod i derevniya v Vizantii v 4-12 vv.', *XII^e Congrès International des Études Byzantines*, Actes (Belgrade/Ochrid 1961). For a further bibliography, see K. Watanabe, 'Problèmes de la «féodalité» byzantine: une mise au point sur les diverses discussions, pt. 2', *Hitotsubashi Journal of Arts and Sciences* (Sept. 1965) 8 ff. Most recently,

Byzantine social formation in terms of the theoretical adequacy of the concepts «ancient» and «feudal» modes of production and the epistemological basis for such conceptualisations, is certainly a major *de-sideratum*. The need to make explicit the theoretical premisses and the nature of the concepts within which research is carried on cannot be ignored - although western, non-marxist historiography has often done so. As an anthropologist and historian recently commented: «We do not compare 'societies', we compare ideal types or models of institutions and social forms. Analysis of the logical consistency of the model and assessment of its heuristic value are to a considerable extent independent of the source of the data from which it originated». ⁶⁰ For pre-

Z.V. Udal'cova, 'Nekotorye osobennosti feodalizma v Vizantii', in: *Beiträge zur byzantinischen Geschichte im 9.-11. Jhdt.*, ed. V. Vavřínek (Prague 1978) 5-30; V. Hrochová, 'La place de Byzance dans la typologie du féodalisme Européen', *ibid.*, 31-45; and esp. *Problemy Social'no-ekonomicheskikh formacii. Istoriko-tipologicheskiye issledovaniya* (Moscow 1975), particularly the contributions of Udal'cova, Liublinskaya, Koroliuk and Barg, for recent discussion and bibliography; also G.G. Litavrin, *Vizantiiskoe obščestvo i gosudarstvo v X-XI vv.* (Moscow 1977), who sees the beginnings of feudal relations of production in the tenth century; and Z.V. Udal'cova, K.A. Osipova, 'Tipologicheskie osobennosti feodalizma v Vizantii', in: *Problemy social'noi struktury i ideologii srednevekovogo obščestva* I (Leningrad 1974) 4-28 (an argument very similar to that elaborated by Anderson, *Passages* (see note 3 above) whereby a declining «slave» mode of production is compromised by developing but arrested feudal relations and can thus never become fully «feudal»). See for a survey of Soviet views and literature Z.V. Udal'cova, *Sovietskoe vizantinovedenie za 50 let* (Moscow 1969); and now Z.V. Udal'cova, Ks. V. Chvostova, 'Les structures sociales et économiques dans la basse Byzance', *JÖB* 31/1 (1981) 131-147 (= *Akten des XVI. Internationalen Byzantinisten-Kongresses* I/1).

Western historians have been as productive, although their priorities have often been different. See part one of Watanabe's article referred to above (*Hitotsubashi Journal of Arts and Sciences* (January 1965) 32-40); and H. Antoniadis-Bibicou, 'Byzance et le mode de production asiatique', *La Pensée* 129 (1966) 47 ff., and esp. E. Patlagean, «Économie paysanne» et «féodalité byzantine», *Annales E.S.C.* 30 (1975) 1371-1396; more recently, the papers edited by Köpstein and Winkelmann, in: *Studien zum 7. Jhdt.*, and those of Köpstein, Winkelmann, Rochow and Ditten, in: *Byzanz im 7. Jhdt.* At a more general level, see H.-G. Beck, *Das byzantinische Jahrtausend* (München 1978) pp. 232 ff.; and Perry Anderson, *Passages* (cited note 3 above) pp. 265-293 whose discussion of the synthesis between ancient and feudal social forms is similar in many respects to that of M. Ya. Siuziumov, 'Zakonomerniy perekhod k feodalizmu i sintez', *Antichnaya Drevnost' i Sredniya Veka* 12 (1975) 33-53. Further bibliography and discussion of the literature is to be found in all these works.

⁶⁰ S.C. Humphreys, *Anthropology and the Greeks* (London/Boston 1978) pp. 12-13. Compare also the point made succinctly by N. Chomsky, *Syntactic Structures* (= *Janua Linguarum*, series minor 4, The Hague/Paris 1976): «The search for rigorous formulation has a much more serious motivation

sent purposes, however, we shall have to be content to note certain key structural characteristics of late Roman/Byzantine society, for it would be impossible to do justice to these considerations here, considerations which have already stimulated an extensive debate.⁶¹

than mere concern for logical niceties or the desire to purify well-established methods of ...analysis. Precisely constructed models... can play an important role, both negative and positive, in the process of discovery itself. By pushing a precise but inadequate formulation to an unacceptable conclusion, we can often expose the exact source of this inadequacy and, consequently, gain a deeper understanding of the ...data. More positively, a formalized theory may automatically provide solutions for many problems other than those for which it was explicitly designed. Obscure and intuition-bound notions can neither lead to absurd conclusions nor provide new and correct ones, and hence they fail to be useful in two important respects. I think that some of those... who have questioned the value of precise and technical development of theory may have failed to recognize the productive potential in the method of rigorously stating a proposed theory and applying it strictly to (the) material with no attempt to avoid unacceptable conclusions by *ad hoc* adjustments or loose formulation». (p. 5) See further A. Foster-Carter, 'The Modes of Production Controversy', *New Left Review* 107 (Jan.-Feb. 1978) 47-77, see esp. 51-52; and the useful discussion of K.-P. Matschke, 'Sozialschichten und Geisteshaltungen', *JÖB* 31/1 (1981) 189-212 (= Akten des XVI. Internationalen Byzantinisten-Kongresses I/1). Note also the remarks of F. Favory, 'Validité des concepts marxistes pour une théorie des sociétés de l'Antiquité. Le modèle impérial romain', *Klio* 63 (1981) 313-330. But for some justifiably critical remarks on the type of historiography typified by the rather tedious first section of this otherwise useful article, see C. Meillassoux, 'From reproduction to production: a Marxist approach to economic anthropology', *Economy and Society* 1/1 (Feb. 1972) 97-8.

⁶¹ This is, of course, a vast and complex area, and has been the setting for a number of important (and lively) debates, particularly within recent western marxist theory. It is inextricably bound up with higher order theoretical questions, in the first instance - the current debates between «discourse theory» on the one hand and materialist epistemology on the other; and with the problems of the construction of theoretically and (ultimately) functionally adequate concepts in the second instance. The problem of the theoretical adequacy of concepts such as «mode of production» and «social formation» are crucial to this discussion, and the validity of *specific* concepts - the «slave mode of production» in particular - has become a central debating point. For some recent discussion and bibliography, see P.Q. Hirst, 'The Uniqueness of the West', *Economy and Society* 4 (1975) 446-475 (review of Anderson, *Passages*); B. Hindess, P.Q. Hirst, *Pre-Capitalist Modes of Production* (London 1975) and their *Mode of Production and Social Formation* (London 1977); see esp. the critique of this by K. Nield and J. Seed; and the comments of Hirst in defence of a discourse-theory approach, in *Economy and Society* 8 (1979) 383 ff; also A. Collier, 'In Defence of Epistemology', in: J. Mepham, D. Hillel Ruben, eds., *Issues in Marxist Philosophy* (Brighton 1979) 55 ff. (a stimulating critique of the theory of «discursive practices» espoused by Hindess, Hirst and others); and D.H. Ruben, *Marxism and Materialism* (Brighton 1979). For the debate on ancient slavery, see O. Patterson, 'On Slavery and Slave Formations', *New Left Review* 117 (Sept.-Oct. 1979) 31-67; E. Wood, 'Marxism and Ancient

To begin with, this social formation demonstrates both a centralised state administrative system, with the attendant service bureaucracy in both civil and military sectors, dependent upon

Greece', *History Workshop Journal* 11 (Spring 1981) 3-22. See further L. V. Danilova, 'Controversial Problems of the Theory of Precapitalist societies', *Soviet Anthropology and Archaeology* 9 (1971) 269 ff; S. Cook, 'Beyond the *Formen*: Towards a Revised Marxist Theory of Precapitalist Formations and the Transition to Capitalism', *Journal of Peasant Studies* 4 (1977) 360-389; J.-P. Ver-nant, 'La lutte des classes', in: *Mythe et Société en Grèce Ancienne* (Paris 1974) 11-29. From a slightly different perspective, and on problems of definition in general, see W. Küttler, 'Zur Frage der methodologischen Kriterien historischer Formationsbestimmung', *Zeitschrift für Geschichts-wissenschaft* 10 (1974); E. Werner, 'Ökonomische und soziale Strukturen im 10. und 11 Jhdt.', in: *XV^e Congrès Int. des Sciences Historiques, rapports* II (Bucarest 1980) 133 f; Favory, *art. cit.* (note 60 above), while criticising quite reasonably traditional empiricist and liberal historiography, fails to come to grips with the problem of mode of production as such at all. See, for a sketch of materialist and non-materialist views of medieval and Byzantine historical work, Matschke, *art. cit.* (note 60 above) esp. 192 ff.

For those unfamiliar with the categories employed here, *mode of production* refers to the «relations of production in their totality», ie. the forces of production (the material basis of the production process), and the relations of production (relations between those who work the means of production - usually land - and those who own or effectively control the means of production and their distribution). It is the «totality of the relations of production» which constitutes the economic (in the widest sense) structure of society, the «real foundation» within which legal, political and ideological structures are embedded and with which they correspond. See Marx, *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, ed. M. Dobb. (Moscow 1970) pp. 20 ff. (introduction); idem, *Wage Labour and Capital*, in: K. Marx, F. Engels, *Selected Works* (London/Moscow 1968) p. 80. By *social formation* is meant a particular (historical) articulation of all these relationships under given conditions, an articulation of elements which is not fortuitous, however, but which exists under determinate and specifiable conditions. It is a complex social totality, within whose structures the possibilities of human action are determined. For the continuing discussion on these categories and the present state of the «base-superstructure» debate, see the literature referred to already, and now G. Cohen, *Karl Marx's Theory of History: A Defence* (Oxford 1978); G. McLennan, *Marxism and the Methodologies of History* (London 1981); E. Werner, *Stadt und Geistesleben im Hochmittelalter* (Weimar 1980); M. Godelier, 'Epistemological Comments on the Problems of comparing Modes of Production and Societies', in: *Toward a Marxist Anthropology*, ed. S. Diamond (The Hague 1979) 71-92; and for a useful critique see D.E. Goodfriend, 'Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose: the Dilemma of the french Structuralist Marxist's', *ibid.*, 93-124. See further A. Schmidt, *Geschichte und Struktur: Fragen einer marxistischen Historik* (München 1971); C. Bobinska, *Historiker und historische Wahrheit* (Berlin 1967); and A. Levine, E. Olin Wright, 'Rationality and Class Struggle' *New Left Review* 123 (Sept.-Oct. 1980) 47-68. Note also the discussion in *History and Theory* 20/4 (1981); and B. C. Hurst, 'The myth of historical evidence', *ibid.*, 20/3, 278-290.

surpluses extracted from the direct producers; and a class of estate-owners dependent upon both the state apparatus and upon their tenants for the maintenance of their position. The Church as an institutional landowner must also be included within this relationship. Conflict over resources between the late Roman state and private landowners - represented by the senatorial aristocracy - had never reached the crisis proportions in the East which marked out the last years of the western empire. But during the sixth and seventh century the hegemony of this class of landed magnates appears to have been broken, the result of a complex of factors, the most significant being the decline of the provincial cities along with their lands; the barbarian invasions of the late sixth and early seventh centuries; and the increasing centralisation of both fiscal administrative and cultural life. It must also be remembered that the power of the senate in the East was to some extent mediated by the greater density of cities and by the continued existence of a «middling» group of provincial landowners. There was likewise always a greater number of more or less autonomous peasant communities subject fiscally directly to the state. Further, the senatorial class in the East never attained the dominant position within the civil bureaucracy which their peers in the West occupied; and it became increasingly excluded even from those sections in which it was represented as the constant wars and invasions during the seventh century promoted the gradual subordination of the civil bureaucracy to the military, from which latter senators had anyway been excluded since the early fourth century.⁶² The last evidence for an organised senatorial political presence of the old order after the reign of Phocas and the early reign of Heraclius, is in the first few years of the

⁶² For a slightly oversimplified but nevertheless valuable summary of these differences, see Anderson, *Passages*, pp. 99 ff. In general, see A.H.M. Jones, 'The Social Background of the Struggle between Paganism and Christianity', in: A. Momigliano, ed., *The Conflict Between Christianity and Paganism* (London 1963) 17 ff; *LRE*, pp. 48 ff., esp. pp. 554 ff; and 'Ancient Empires and the Economy: Rome', in: *Third International Conference of Economic History, Paris 1965* (Paris 1970) 114 f., see 131 f; See also, A. Piganiol, *L'Empire Chrétien* (see note 12 above) pp. 345 ff; Beck, 'Senat und Volk von Konstantinopel', in: *Sitzungsber. d. Bayer. Akad. d. Wiss., phil.-hist. Klasse* (1966) 1-75, see 18 ff; Latouche, *The Birth of Western Economy*, pp. 21 ff. on the decline of towns and the rise of the senatorial elite in the West; see also P. Brown, *The World of Late Antiquity* (London 1971) pp. 43 ff; M. Arnheim, *The Senatorial Aristocracy in the Later Roman Empire* (Oxford 1972) pp. 39 ff; F. Tinnfeld, *Die frühbyzantinische Gesellschaft* (München 1977) pp. 59 ff.

young Constans II.⁶³ After this time, while the senate certainly does not disappear, it no longer appears to represent the interests of a major fraction of the landowning class. In its stead appears a new class of centrally-appointed provincial military and civil administrative officers, which owes its origins to precisely those conditions which promoted the disappearance of the unitary «senatorial» order. Certain members of the new elite may well have been counted also among the families of the older senatorial class; but they were able to integrate themselves into the developing pattern of central administrative intervention in local affairs - particularly fiscal and military matters - by taking responsibility for local state obligations, a point which Guillou has recently generalised from the example of Egypt.⁶⁴

Now it is the presence of both «ancient» and «feudal» elements within this social formation which has led to such strongly defended yet contradictory views of the mode of production within which Byzantine society is to be situated. This has itself often been the result of a failure to examine the theoretical status of, and to define and specify, the concepts in terms of which these developments are to be analysed, namely the ancient and feudal modes of production and more particularly, to differentiate between the processes by which surpluses are extracted within each mode, and how these processes are articulated within particular sets of relations of production. Instead, we are confronted with sets of atheoretical, a prioristic generalisations, in this particular case usually presented in the form of *ad hoc* correlations between sets of variables. Much debate over the nature of the colonate, for example, and the degree to which this approximates to «feudal» exploitative forms, has been concentrated at a purely descriptive level: the form and appearance of aspects of later Roman or Byzantine relations of production are isolated as a set of independent phenomena, and many scholars have then proceeded directly to making a simple comparison between this form of exploitation of resources - among others - to simi-

⁶³ See Beck, *Senat und Volk*, 40; G. Ostrogorsky, *Geschichte des byzantinischen Staates* (München 1963) p. 95; and for a good general survey, F. Winkelmann, in: *Byzanz im 7. Jhdt.* (see note 32 above) pp. 180 ff.

⁶⁴ Guillou, *Transformations des structures* (art. cit., note 26 above); and see especially A.P. Každan, I.S. Čičurov, 'O strukture vizantijskogo obščestva VII-IX vv'. *Viz. očerki* (Moscow 1977) 136 ff

lar forms in other social formations which have also been labelled «feudal», in order to reach the conclusion that late Roman or Byzantine society was or was not feudal.⁶⁵ Such an approach may well provide a starting point for comparative empirical work; but as the basis for an *analysis* it is at best inadequate, when not downright misleading. While efforts to determine the conceptual status of a notion such as «feudal» are to be found, they rarely penetrate beyond this descriptive level. Thus the debate on whether or not Byzantine society is «feudal» has been predominantly a debate over the location of a whole variety of social and economic *phenomena*, and the degree to which they bear comparison with feudalism *par excellence*, in its various periods: the social formation and exploitative relations of production of the medieval West. Byzantine feudalism depends ultimately on whether one accepts the *appearance* of Byzantine society as approximating to the *appearance* of certain other feudal social formations.⁶⁶

⁶⁵ This is not to deny the importance of the many valuable studies devoted to the problem, which have presented a wealth of vital material and detail on the nature of Byzantine social relations, and have posed a whole series of crucial questions; but have been in general unable to arrive at conclusions other than those based on description and comparison alone. For a cautious comment on the problems inherent in the debate, see R. Boutruche, *Seigneurie et féodalité* (Paris 1959) pp. 259-279; and the survey of Matschke, cited note 60 above, especially 202 ff, who carefully avoids becoming embroiled in the conceptual aspects of the problem, however. For some useful comments in this respect, albeit somewhat dated by their context, see Witold Kula, *An Economic Theory of the Feudal System: towards a model of the Polish Economy 1500-1800*, trans. L. Garner (London 1976) pp. 11 ff., 19 ff.

⁶⁶ See for example, the recent contribution of V. Hrochová, 'La place de Byzance dans la typologie du féodalisme européen', in: *Beiträge* (op. cit., note 59 above) 31 ff; and L.E. Havlik, 'The genesis of Feudalism and the Slav peoples', *ibid.*, 117 ff. Note also Yu.M. Kobiščanov, 'Tipy i sistemy feodal'nykh obščestv', in: *Tipologiya razvitiya feodalizma v stranakh vostoka* (Moscow 1975); and Z.V. Udalcova, 'Problemy tipologii feodalizma v Vizantii' in: *Problemy social'no-ekonomičeskikh formacij* (op. cit., note 59 above) 124-157; also the discussion of Udalcova and Osipova in *VV* 36 (1974) 3 ff; and Z.V. Udalcova, 'Vizantiya i Zapadnaya Evropa (tipologičeskoe nablyudeniya)', *Viz. očerki* (Moscow 1977) 37 ff. All these approaches, while often extremely valuable in terms of the empirical material presented and discussed, rely upon a number of premisses which the present paper would not accept without debate: a set of categories of modes of production taken uncritically from Marx's *Pre-Capitalist Economic Formations* and *The German Ideology*; relationships between mode of production and social formation which remain unproblematised; and a methodology which relies upon phenomenal comparison rather than analysis of the articulation and dynamic of the social for-

Had the concepts employed in this debate been more thoroughly examined and more carefully defined - a task which must necessarily be a major theoretical undertaking, but which Byzantinists in particular have been peculiarly reluctant to approach - and if it were recognised that the absence or presence of a particular mode of production simply cannot be determined by the appearance of the social relations alone, but rather by their internal articulation, then the debate might have been more fruitful. In particular, the mode of appropriation is central. As has recently been pointed out, processes of surplus-appropriation are key features in differentiating between modes of production.⁶⁷ It is above all such differences between the «ancient» and «feudal» modes of production which must be clarified in the case of Byzantium, and in terms of which any attempt to determine where in this typology the later Roman and Byzantine social formations are to be situated. Any approach which tends to see each mode of production as unified sets of relations which cannot overlap with any other set, rather than as analytical constructs for the elucidation of complexes of interwoven relations of production; and which thereby tends to identify social formations within the context of only one mode of production, is necessarily unable to conceive clearly of social formations which are in fact a complex of relationships between elements from different modes of production - a criticism which can be levelled, albeit for different reasons, both at the approach of Hindess and Hirst as well as at many of those with whom they take issue. This is not to say that

mation(s) in question. This is particularly disappointing, insofar as much of the research has been carried on within a purportedly historical materialist framework which appears to ignore some of its own more fundamental principles! See for some relevant comments Hirst's critique, *The Uniqueness of the West* (cited, note 61 above) 450 ff; and for the parallel debate among French marxist and marxist-structuralist anthropologists and historians, which has proceeded along slightly different lines, see the essays collected in *Critique of Anthropology* 13/14 (1979), esp. those by Godelier, Terray, Meillassoux, and the article of Godelier cited in note 61 above. Note also the critical discussion by Meillassoux, *From reproduction to production* (cited, note 60 above) particularly 96-98.

⁶⁷ This is certainly a guiding principle behind Marx's main writings on the subject, notably in *Pre-Capitalist Economic Formations* (ed. E. Hobsbawm, London 1964). The point is emphasised in the otherwise often facile anti-historical approach of Hindess and Hirst, *Pre-Capitalist Modes of Production* - see for critiques the article of Nield and Seed referred to already; and the review by T. Asad, H. Wolpe, 'Concepts of Modes of Production', *Economy and Society* 5 (1976) 470-505.

elements from different modes of production can be juxtaposed at liberty - they can co-exist while remaining antagonistic, and one will usually be dominant - but rather that within the terms of the conditions of existence of a given mode of production, certain elements and combinations may or may not be possible, depending both on conjunctural and technical or environmental factors.⁶⁸ It is the elucidation of these conjunctures and relationships, examined from the perspective of an explicit theoretical position, that the historian must undertake.

What may appear, therefore, superficially as elements of one mode of production are not necessarily to be seen as representative of the social formation as a whole. The appearance of limited «feudal» relations within Byzantium - specifically, the appearance on large provincial estates of landlord-tenant relations, in which the economic and social position of the landlord depends upon the absorption of self-supporting tenants within exploitative relations of production, through the landlord's effectively controlling their means of reproduction, i.e. by the imposition of feudal rent - need not mean that Byzantine society as a whole was «feudal». Indeed, the continued existence of a centralised state maintained by the extraction of a surplus imposed according to the rights and status of citizens (a fundamental feature of classical urban civilization) - however broadly defined - within a bureaucratic civic apparatus, through which social and political advancement occurs, necessarily limits the degree to which such feudal relations can be extended.

Serfdom existed in other social formations within other modes of production also, and we must be careful to define «feudalism» not just in terms of one of its components - the question of the juridical and political framework within which Byzantine landlords were enabled to extract surpluses from peasants, the relationship of this class of landlords to the state and the emperor, and of the structure of systems of vassalage and the military fief, must also be considered.⁶⁹

⁶⁸ See in particular Asad and Wolpe, *art. cit.*, 492 ff. and Foster-Carter, *Modes of Production* (see note 60 above) 55-56. Note also Favory, *art. cit.* (n. 60 above), 319 ff.

⁶⁹ See G.E.M. de Ste Croix, *The Class Struggle in the Ancient World* (Oxford, 1981) IV, v. I should like to thank the author for allowing me to read several sections of this work in advance of publication. Much work has been devoted to the question of the appearance of the fief in Byzantium, concentrated around the *pronoia* - *exkousseia* institution and the relationship of landowners in posses-

Now here it must be stressed that the centralised extraction of tax, on whatever basis, is not to be assimilated to a variety of feudal rent.⁷⁰ Indeed, the nature of the taxes and corvées imposed by the state and their economic and juridical basis makes any such assimilation with feudal rent empirically most dubious. The role of the state in fixing the obligations levied upon the rural populace must be particularly strongly emphasised, whether these belonged on an estate which had been partially or wholly exempted from its fiscal obligations to the central authority or not - the landlord or landowner was still limited by and subject to the state administrative apparatus. Only at a much later date is there evidence that magnates were able to free themselves from these limitations - although we may reasonably assume that many were able in practice to appropriate more than permitted by the state at quite an early date. But even then, the greater part of the labour services owed by the rural labour force to the state, and firmly rooted in tradition, were intended to service the state apparatuses - maintenance of roads, bridges, fortifications etc. Tax payments in kind were intended to feed the provincial administration and garrison. It can only have been with great difficulty that private landowners turned such services to their own advantage, for they can have made little contribution to the sort of demesne production typical of the western manorial economy. Further, feudal rent assumes both the ability of the landlord to control the producers' means of social and economic reproduction; and the legal/political conditions of existence of such relations of production; not merely the forced expropriation of an undetermined surplus.⁷¹ The state in social formations which can be situated within

sion of such rights to the dependent *paroikoi* who worked their lands. On the whole, this work has been based upon comparisons with western feudalism, rather than upon any analysis of the internal dynamic of these developments. See G. Ostrogorsky, *Pour l'Histoire de la Féodalité Byzantine* (Bruxelles 1954), the classic study of these institutions. Further literature will be found in the works cited in notes 4 and 59 above. See also Boutruche, *Seigneurie et Féodalité* i, pp. 269 ff; and see Matschke, *art. cit.*, 204 f.

⁷⁰ As suggested by, among others, A. P. Každan, 'K voprosu ob osobennostyakh feodal'noy sobstvennosti v Vizantii 8-10 vv.', *VV* 10 (1956) 48-65; cf. also *idem*, *Derevniya i gorod v Vizantii 9-10 vv.* (Moscow 1960), for example.

⁷¹ *Capital* iii (London/Moscow 1959) pp. 790 ff. Feudal relations of production also assume the existence of a particular political/juridical order - the conditions of existence of the maintenance of the

the ancient mode of production, on the other hand, has direct control over the producers' means of reproduction only insofar as it depends in the first instance on its ability, as the community of citizens, to distribute and control the means of production - land - by right of citizenship and membership of the body politic. The state is originally a body of individual landowners with collective property in public land.⁷² The exploitation of citizens takes place through collective (ie. state) appropriation and customary obligations. Taxation is ultimately that part of the surplus contributed by the citizen-producers on a contractual basis towards the maintenance and reinforcement of the political/legal apparatus which secures their possession of their own means of production/reproduction. With the increase in the division of labour, the introduction of slaves on a larger scale, the subordination of citizen to citizen and the generation of objective antagonisms between various groups in terms of their relationship to the means of production, the state becomes the legislative and executive organ of the ruling class of citizens, which can henceforth use it to maintain and further the extraction of tax and their own position. The concomitant ideological systems, within which such transformations take place, vary, of course, according to local cultural/political patterns.⁷³

So far, therefore, there seems little justification for suggesting that the Byzantine social formation belonged clearly within any *single* mode of production, at least before the eleventh and twelfth centuries. It seems rather to demonstrate a complex articulation of elements from both ancient and feudal modes, that is, there is evidence for modes of surplus-appropriation which can belong to each of these conceptual categories. Only when the ability of the state to control the distribution of the means of production and the rate of surplus extraction, and hence to effect the extraction of the surplus necessary to its own further existence, becomes impaired, and when the imposition of feudal rent by the majority faction within the ruling landowning class

imposition of feudal rent - which must also figure. Serfdom *alone* is not enough. See G.E.M. de Ste Croix, *op. cit.* (note 69 above) IV, v

⁷² *Pre-Capitalist Economic Formations*, pp. 72-73; 92 ff.

⁷³ See the interesting comments of E. Wood (*art. cit.*, note 61 above); and also Humphreys, *Anthropology and the Greeks* (see note 60 above) pp. 144 ff.

becomes dominant - in other words, when the state becomes dependent upon the continued political allegiance of this class for its existence - may we speak of a real «feudalisation» - not in the quasi legal sense (although a similar political and juridical apparatus to that of the west, partly under western influence, also developed) but in terms of the social relations of production. Such was the case in Byzantium after the eleventh century;⁷⁴ but it is important to note that it was chiefly through the entrenched ideology of the state that this compromise situation prevailed at all. The Byzantine feudal class of landowners was ideologically bound to the concept of a centralised, bureaucratic and imperial state long after this ideology ceased to represent their objective interests - partly, of course, because this class was itself a result of the bureaucratic establishment and had always supplied the leading officials in the Constantinopolitan apparatus. Like the state which it represented and yet whose interests it threatened, the class of landowners was split ideologically between serving the state as such, and thereby opposing their own interests (as independent or quasi-independent magnates), and opposing the emperor and the policies of the central government in order to protect these very interests.⁷⁵ Whereas the economic contradictions between centralised state and independent magnates was progressively resolved to the advantage of the latter, the political contradiction was not so easily perceived, the more so in view of the strength of the imperial ideology and the orthodox Church - the two, of course, inextricably bound together. As an ideology concentrated around the position of the emperor, rather than the concept of the state as such, it was not perceived as contradictory within the context of the changed relations of production. The political and ideological support of the «feudal» nobility enabled the Byzantine state to survive as a parasitic political form which was doomed ultimately - partly through factional conflict within the ruling class for control of the state

⁷⁴ A point made in the context of a somewhat different argument by Udal'cova and Osipova. *Tipologičeskie osobennosti* (see note 59 above). See also G.G. Litavrin. *Vizantiiskoe obščestvo i gosudarstvo*, esp. p. 289; A.P. Každan. *Social'nii sostav gosподstvuyuşčego klassa Vizantii XI-XII vv* (Moscow 1973) pp. 253 ff; G. Ostrogorsky, 'Observations on the Aristocracy in Byzantium'. *DOP* 25 (1971) 12 f.

⁷⁵ See Každan, *Social'nii sostav*, *loc. cit.*

apparatus - to economic and military extinction. Examples such as this, incidentally, demonstrate the structural importance of ideology, since it can serve to reinforce patterns of social, cultural and political practice which may in their effects be contrary to the objective interests of those who maintain it.⁷⁶ It is likewise at the level of the articulation of processes of surplus-appropriation with ideology that a given social formation receives its characteristic external appearance.

The preceding comments have not been intended to provide more than a short critique of some accepted approaches to the problem of the nature of Byzantine society, and in the process to question the nature and validity of the assumptions implicit in much modern Byzantine historiography. By way of illustration, I have tried to suggest that there was clearly a shift within the structure of late Roman/Byzantine society away from cities as representative, functional components of a whole administrative and economic apparatus; but that to conclude from this - and from the other changes which can be detected in later Roman and early Byzantine society and institutions - that the Byzantine social formation represents also a transformation to a different mode of production may in fact be quite wrong.

Exactly what was the nature of the «transition» from late Roman to Byzantine society? We are confronted by changes at several different levels. As a result of the decline and demise of the hellenistic city and its attendant institutions, the *locus* of both social and political power shifts quite clearly to Constantinople, the seat of the administrative bureaucracy which had itself contributed to the decline of the cities, in its efforts to secure and retain control of its sources of revenue. The rise of a new, in origins bureaucratic, class of landowners, was facilitated by the drastic weakening of the older senatorial and municipal aristocracy, which suffered both politically and economically during the upheavals of the early seventh century, and again economically at the hands of invaders in the Balkans and in Asia Minor thereafter; and by the fact that the state and its appointees were able to intervene directly in the ensuing process of provincial re-adjustment. The rise of the new, militarized «service» aristocracy was made possi-

⁷⁶ Debate around this problematic is still in its infancy. Note Matschke's useful remarks, *art. cit.* (see note 60) above) 205-6.

ble by the military decentralisation of the state and the subordination of civil to military authority during the seventh century. The ideological shifts which accompanied this transformation are still in need of much research; but it is clear from what is known of the nature of the relations of production (between rural producers, the state and private landowners), from the continued existence of the centralised fiscal machinery, the ways in which the state enrolled and maintained its armies and, later, came into open conflict with the new aristocracy over resources and revenues; and the differences in emphasis but not in content within the whole state ideological apparatus; it is clear from all of this that there occurred a fundamental shift within the structure of the late Roman social formation, a shift which produced the society familiar from the seventh to the eleventh and twelfth centuries, but which remained nevertheless within the same basic structural framework which bounded its predecessor. The late Roman and Byzantine social formation demonstrates right up to the eleventh century at the very earliest first one variant and then another of a complex articulation of elements from both ancient and feudal modes of production. Even after this time feudal relations of production did not succeed in entirely subordinating the structure of the state; and while we may speak of a progressive feudalisation, we are entitled only on condition that we qualify our statements very carefully to speak of a genuine Byzantine feudalism.

The seventh century thus witnessed the final stage of a slow transformation from one social formation to another; it also set the pattern both in terms of the social relations of production and in terms of the imperial ideology and its components, for the structural impasse which characterised the Byzantine political and social formation for the remaining seven or eight centuries of its existence. Paradoxically, perhaps, the seventh and eighth centuries witnessed the Roman/Byzantine state at its strongest, for the senatorial aristocracy had been weakened to the point where it effectively disappeared, while the new service elite, still in its infancy, was in no position to act independently of the apparatus which had promoted its development. The seventh and eighth centuries saw the last flowering of the ancient state.

THE COMMISSIONING OF A LATE TWELFTH CENTURY GOSPEL BOOK: THE FRONTISPICES OF MS PARIS, BIBL. NAT. COPTE 13

LUCY-ANNE HUNT/BIRMINGHAM

The purpose of this paper is to evaluate the evidence for the process of commission of a Christian work of art in later 12th. century Egypt. The Coptic Gospel book in Paris, Bibl. Nat. Copte 13¹ is exceptional not only in its extensive illustration of Gospel scenes and frontispieces, but also in the clear information given about the production of the MS by the inscriptions accompanying the frontispieces and the colophons completing each Gospel. This information strongly suggests that the MS was produced as part of an active propaganda campaign by the orthodox Coptic Church in the face of opposition during a period of theological controversy in the late 1170s. These specific circumstances of the MS's production can both elucidate certain problems in the illustration of the MS and provide a context for considering the rôle of Coptic Church patronage in early Ayyûbid Egypt.

MS Coptic 13 has been an object of interest both for its text and for its Gospel and frontispiece illustrations all of which are reproduced by l'Abbé Leroy in his work on Copto-Arabic manuscripts.² It is known

¹ Horner, *Northern Dialect*, I pp. xli-xlvi; L. Delaporte, *Catalogue Sommaire des Manuscrits Coptes de la Bibliothèque Nationale I*, Manuscrits Bohairiques, Paris 1912 pp. 11-12 (as Copte 14); Millet, *Recherches*, index p. 745; Buchthal and Kurz, *Hand List*, No. 268 p. 65 with bibliography; Shenouda, *Copte 13* passim; *L'Art Copte*, Exhibition Catalogue, Villa Hügel, Essen 1963 No. 403 and Petit Palais, Paris 1964 No. 284 p. 227; Cramer, *Koptische Buchmalerei*, Index A Nr. 33 and Plates; M. Cramer, *Koptische Paläographie*, Wiesbaden 1964 Nr. 34 Taf. 66; G. Theodoraki, *Les Enluminures du ms. Copte 13 de la B.N.*, Univ. of Paris Doctoral thesis 1966 (not consulted); Leroy, *MSS Syriacques*, Index p. 464; Leroy, *MSS Coptes-Arabes*, No. XVI pp. 113-148, Pls. 4(1-2), 41-74, C and D.

² Leroy, *MSS Coptes-Arabes* cited above, with the correction of certain of the folio references (fols.

that the four Gospels in the Northern, Bohairic version of the Coptic Gospels were written by Michael, Metropolitan of Damietta, between 1178-80. This information is given by the bilingual scribal signatures in Coptic and Arabic at the end of each Gospel and endorsed by the inscriptions of two of the frontispieces, one of which specifies Michael as the artist as well as the scribe.³ The MS was made, then, shortly after Saladin's accession to power in Egypt, in Damietta, which was a major port and commercial centre of upper Egypt, participating with Alexandria and Cairo in the important trade of the Mediterranean.⁴ The large size of the book (38 × 27 cm) and the inscription of ownership to the Church of the Theotokos in Damietta on the title page, suggests that the book was intended for use in Church services. The text is uniform throughout the MS, interrupted by ornamental punctuation marks and floral motifs marking chapter divisions, with rectangular gaps reserved for the Gospel scenes.⁵ The MS is arranged in quires which are marked in Arabic and Syriac, as well as Coptic letters, an overlapping which proposes associations that are endorsed by the MS's illustration.

MS Copte 13 contains one of the most elaborate cycles of Gospel scenes in any late 12th. century Gospel MS. Its seventy-four frieze-like scenes comprise forty-two in the Gospel of Matthew, three in Mark, sixteen in Luke and thirteen in John, and concentrate on the public life

142r, 167v, 193r, 214v, 215v, 274v). Leroy does not include codicological information about the MS.

³ The bilingual notes at the end of each Gospel provide the information that the Gospel of Matthew was completed in April 1178 (fol. 87r), Mark in September 1179 (fol. 133r), Luke in October 1179 (fol. 218v) and John in January 1180 (fol. 281r) and that the Arabic collations were done in 1180: Horner, *Northern Dialect* pp. xlii ff; and Leroy, *MSS Coptes-Arabes* p. 146. For the frontispiece inscription of Michael as scribe and artist, see note 49 below.

⁴ For the early years of Ayyūbid rule in Egypt, see S. Lane-Poole, *A History of Egypt in the Middle Ages*, London 1901 pp. 190 ff; H. A. R. Gibb, 'The Rise of Saladin, 1169-89', Chapter XVIII of Gen. Ed. K. M. Setton, *A History of the Crusades*, Vol. I Ed. M. W. Baldwin, *The First Hundred Years*, Philadelphia 1955 pp. 563 ff. Gibb's approach is countered by A. S. Ehrenkreutz, *Saladin*, Albany New York 1972, *passim*, a critical account of Saladin's rule. For a survey of the whole Ayyūbid period, cf. Cl. Cahen, 'Ayyūbids', *Encyclopedia of Islam* 2nd. Ed. pp. 796 ff. For the economic position of Damietta, S. D. Goitein, *A Mediterranean Society*, Vol. I Economic Foundations, Berkeley and Los Angeles 1967, Index p. 534 (Damietta-Dimyāt).

⁵ Horner, *Northern Dialect* p. xlii referred to the 'peculiar' text of Copte 13 and likened it in particular respects to other 12th-14th. century Coptic Gospel MSS, including MS Oxford Bodleian Huntington 17 of 1173, for which see below, note 51.

of Christ and the Passion.⁶ The formats of many scenes are comparable. They are rectangular and based on a groundline, and although they are unframed, individual elements of the scenes - figures, plants, or architectural motifs - are often placed symmetrically in order to balance the composition. They usually occupy the full width of the single column of text, or at least half of it. The vertical measurement of the illustrations varies between 5-10 cm., giving way to a larger picture space for the feast scenes and certain others. These differences in scale taken with some stylistic variations, have been argued to suggest the work of several artists aside from Michael himself.⁷ Overall, the style of the Gospel scenes is sketchy and informal. Heavy brown or black lines outline pink underdrawings, over which a variety of colours, blue, red, orange, pink, purple, green, black and gold is applied, often quite carelessly. The illustrations are slotted into the relevant text, suggesting that the execution of the MS was planned as an integral whole. Scenes are accompanied by Arabic inscriptions either labelling the main figures in a scene or paraphrasing the Gospel text, and were probably added at a considerably later date to elucidate the scenes for those who no longer understood Coptic.⁸

The Gospel cycle of Copte 13 raises several issues, one of which is its place in any Coptic or other Oriental Christian tradition of narrative illustration. While several illustrated MSS and wallpaintings in the churches of Cairo and monastic churches elsewhere attest to Coptic artistic activity during the 12th-13th. centuries, the only other extensive Gospel cycle is that of the New Testament in the Institut Catholique in Paris (MS Copte-Arabe 1) made in Cairo in 1249-50.⁹ Did such a tradi-

⁶ Leroy, *MSS Coptes-Arabs* pp. 116 ff, Shenouda, *Copte 13* passim.

⁷ Leroy, *MSS Coptes-Arabs* pp. 147-8 attributed the frontispieces and decorative elements in the text to Michael himself. Given the changes in style throughout the MS, all that can be definitely assumed is that Michael had control over the production over the MS as a whole.

⁸ The Arabic of the inscriptions is grammatically corrupt, especially in the transliteration of words, and colloquialisms are common. Some are even inaccurate as Shenouda, *Copte 13* pp. 14-15 points out.

⁹ Leroy, *MSS Coptes-Arabs* No. XXI pp. 157-174, Pls. 72-92, and E.F.G. for a description of the miniatures and previous bibliography. The Pauline Epistles and Acts (Cairo, Coptic Museum Bibl. 94) are described, No. XXII pp. 174-7 and Pls. 10(2), 20(1-2, mislabelled), 93-5; L-A Hunt, *The Illustration of a Thirteenth-Century New Testament Manuscript from Cairo* (Paris, Institut

tion of narrative New Testament illustration exist prior to Copte 13 in Coptic art? Then, if Copte 13 is the earliest surviving example of such narrative Coptic art, to what extent can it be derived from Byzantine and Oriental Christian cycles of the late 12th. century? A quite different question is the relationship of Copte 13 to Islamic painting of the early 13th. century, with which it has been associated as offering a 'missing link'.

There is little evidence to support the argument that complete cycles of narrative New Testament scenes existed in early Coptic art. New Testament scenes are not unusual, but a distinct preference is shown for particular scenes as opposed to organised cycles. The Mo'allaka lintel, for instance, is carved with scenes of the Entry into Jerusalem and the Ascension.¹⁰ Another example in wood is the figure of the Virgin from an Annunciation group of the 5th. or 6th. century.¹¹ Liturgical combs dated to the 6th. century and later are carved with christological scenes.¹² Some instances of New Testament scenes were recorded amongst 5th-6th. century catacomb paintings which have since been destroyed. Scenes of Eucharistic and funerary significance were depicted at Karmuz at Alexandria,¹³ while those from the underground church at Deir Abu Hennes near Antinoë illustrate the infancy and miracles of Christ.¹⁴ Scenes from the life of Christ appear amongst

Catholique Copte-Arabe I) PhD thesis, London University 1981; L-A Hunt, 'Byzantine-Islamic influences in the Illustration of MS Paris, Institut Catholique, Copte-Arabe I' *Résumés der Kurzbeiträge*. XVI Int. Byzantinistenkongress, Section 10.2, Wien 1981.

¹⁰ M. Sacopoulo, 'Le Linteau copte dit d'Al Mo'allaka', *C.A.* IX (1957) pp. 99-115; J. Beckwith, *Coptic Sculpture 300-1300* London, 1963 pp. 13 ff dates the carving 'from the second half of the fourth or into the first half of the fifth century'; Badawy, *Coptic Art and Archaeology* p. 113 (and figs. 3.28-3.31) follows Sacopoulo's dating.

¹¹ P. Lemerle, 'Un bois sculpté de l'Annonciation', *Monuments et Mémoires publiés par l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres* Vol. 43 (1949) pp. 89-118; *l'Art Copte*, Petit Palais, Paris 1964 No. 93 p. 111.

¹² See for example *l'Art Copte*, Petit Palais Paris 1964 No. 90 p. 107; Badawy, *Coptic Art and Archaeology* p. 339. Several pyxides of the 5th-6th century formerly attributed to Egypt have more recently been assigned to Syria or Constantinople, cf. St. Clair Archer, *Early Christian Pyxides with New Testament Scenes*, Princeton PhD. thesis 1977 (University Microfilms) with bibliography.

¹³ Badawy, *Coptic Art and Archaeology* pp. 241-2 and fig. 4.14 with earlier bibliography.

¹⁴ J. Clédat, 'Notes archéologiques and philologiques', *B. I. F. A. O.* Vol. 2 (1902) pp. 44-54; Badawy, *Coptic Art and Archaeology* p. 248 and fig. 4.20.

the wallpaintings at Bawit, usually dated between the 6th-8th. centuries.¹⁵ These scenes in early Coptic art do not, however, constitute New Testament cycles on the scale of MS Copte 13. They are usually single scenes or a limited group, with specific liturgical, funerary or memorial connotations. When cycles do appear in early Coptic art, they often illustrate Old Testament events, such as those at Bagawat,¹⁶ or saints' lives, as that of St. Menas.¹⁷ Such early Coptic art undoubtedly influenced individual scenes and motifs in the illustration of MS Copte 13, but this cannot be taken as far as Professor S. Shenouda would like, in proposing that the cycle of Copte 13 represents a condensation or 'conflation' of earlier Coptic illustrated Gospel cycles, as a basis for 'Hellenistic', Byzantine and Islamic features.¹⁸

Rather, there is evidence to suggest that the idea of New Testament narrative cycles derived from elsewhere, especially Syria, and that this influence from the Syrian and other Oriental Christian churches was sustained up to, and beyond, the 12th. century. While early Coptic art has no contemporary surviving examples of cycles comparable to the 6th. century Syriac Rabula Gospels, there is one piece of evidence for such a cycle in Coptic MS illumination predating Copte 13. This is afforded by the parchment fragments of Gospel text with pen drawings preserved in the British Library (MS Or. 3367, olim Or. 3579) which came from Akhmīm according to Crum and apparently date from the 9th-10th. centuries.¹⁹ These surviving fragments

¹⁵ Badawy, *Coptic and Archaeology* p. 252 (and fig. 4.29) and bibliography; Torp has proposed that the function of the 'chapels' at Bawit, as the excavator Clédât termed them, was memorial, with cells or habitation of the monks on the upper storey: H. Torp, 'Some Aspects of Early Coptic Monastic Architecture', *Byzantion* Vols. 25-27 (1955-57) fasc. 2 pp. 513-538, esp. pp. 530-2. This suggestion helps to explain the apparently random arrangement of scenes together with 'icons' of monks and saints, which do not constitute a 'cycle'.

¹⁶ A. Fakhry, *The Necropolis of El-Bagawât in Kharga Oasis*, Cairo 1951 especially No. 30 site 4, 'Chapel of the Exodus' and No. 80; H. Stern, 'Les Peintures du Mausolée de l'Exodus à El-Bagawât' C.A. Vol. XI (1960) pp. 93-119 dates the paintings between the Constantinian period and the mid-5th. century; Badawy, *Coptic Art and Archaeology* pp. 243 ff. and bibliography.

¹⁷ D.N. Wilber, 'The Coptic Frescoes of St. Menas at Medinet Habu', *A. Bull.* Vol. XXII (June, 1940) No. 2 pp. 86 ff; C.M. Kaufmann, *Zur Ikonographie der Menas-Ampullen*, Cairo 1910, passim.

¹⁸ Shenouda, *Copte 13*, Preface pp. 1-3, Conclusions, pp. 203 ff.

¹⁹ W.E. Crum, *Catalogue of the Coptic Manuscripts in the British Museum*, London 1905 No. 753 p. 328; Leroy, *MSS Coptes-Arabes* No. XIII pp. 107-8.

clearly once constituted a marginal cycle similar to that of the Rabula Gospels but at an approximately contemporary date with marginal Greek Psalters as the Chludov Psalter.²⁰ Moreover, Copte 13 can itself be directly related to Syriac MS illumination. In addition to the evidence of the partial numbering of the quires of the MS with Syriac lettering, several scenes bear a close relationship to those of the Rabula Gospels, as Professor H. Buchthal pointed out in proposing that Copte 13, with Islamic MSS of the early 13th. century, 'should be regarded as Islamic offshoots of Hellenistic culture in the Eastern Mediterranean', derived from the narrative cycles of the Syriac Gospels with an overlay of contemporary Islamic influence.²¹ Just one instance of this similarity is the very full depiction of the Crucifixion (fol. 83v) which, as in the Rabula Gospels (fol. 13r), includes the crucifixion of the two thieves, the group of mourning women and the casting of lots for Christ's garment amongst the soldiers taking place on the mountainous hillside of Golgotha.²² The illustration of Copte 13 also revives, or rather continues, the tenets of such early Christian art in the lively agitation of the figures.²³

The strongest nearer-contemporary influence shaping the Gospel cycle of Copte 13 is Byzantine illumination of the late 11th. century. The dependence on the Paris Gospels (Bibl. Nat. Gr. 74) and the Laurentian Gospels (Florence, Laur. Plut. VI 23) is particularly clear, both in the extent and layout of Copte 13's cycle, and in aspects of its iconography, as has been recognised.²⁴ Excepting the late 12th. century 'Chicago 2400' Greek New Testament and the Georgian Gelati

²⁰ S. Dufrenne, *Illustration des Psautiers grecs du Moyen Age*, I Paris 1966 passim; V. Lazarev, *Storia della pittura bizantina*, Turin 1967 pp. 116-7 and bibliography.

²¹ Buchthal, '«Hellenistic» Miniatures' pp. 132-3; Walter S. Cook referred to scenes from Copte 13 as examples of an early Eastern Christian tradition in his article, 'The earliest painted panels of Catalonia', *A. Bull.* X No. 2 (Dec. 1927) especially pp. 168 (Entry into Jerusalem), 183 (Betrayal), 188, 193 (Descent from the Cross).

²² For the Copte 13 Crucifixion, Leroy, *MSS Coptes-Arabes* p. 130 and Pl. 57 (2). For the Rabula Gospels (Florence, Laur. Plut. I, 56) cf. Leroy, *MSS Syriaques* pp. 150-2 and, Pl. 32; Millet, *Recherches* pp. 430, 432.

²³ For example, the Sinope Gospels, cf. A. Grabar, *Les Peintures de l'Evangélaire de Sinope*, Paris 1948.

²⁴ In detail, cf. Shenouda, *Copte 13*, passim.

and Djroutchi Gospels, Copte 13 ranks next to these two Gospels books in the actual number of scenes represented.²⁵ This dependence is evident throughout the MS, in the choice of narrative Gospel scenes and parables, their layout in relation to the text, and in the composition of figures, landscape, trees and the characteristic groundline of grass. Complete scenes, as the Massacre of the Innocents (fol. 6v) or the Healing of the Afflicted (fol. 44 v) can be traced to the Greek Gospels, as well as particular details, as the depiction of St. John the Baptist with the axe at the foot of the tree (fol. 7r).²⁶

This dependence is, however, more eclectic than the result of a 'conflating method' as Shenouda argues, whereby a particular scene condenses a number of separate episodes in the model.²⁷ Undeniably certain scenes combine a series of episodes. The Healing of the Lunatic (fol. 49r) is a case in point, where Christ in the centre of the scene is implored by the lunatic's father, while the Healing itself and the questioning of Christ by the Disciples appear on either side, derived from separate episodes in the Laurentian Gospels (fol. 35v).²⁸ Other scenes, however, argue against such a deliberate method of copying. The Transfiguration in Matthew's Gospel (fol 48r) even suggests a somewhat haphazard adaptation of a variety of sources. In the upper part of the scene the figures of Christ and the two prophets appear to be

²⁵ 372 scenes are illustrated in MS Paris, B.N. Gr. 74, 288 in Florence, Laur. Plut. VI 23, 90 surviving in MS Chicago 2400 (now Univ. Lib. MS 965), compared with 65 in MS Leningrad 105; comparison in ed. H.C. Colwell and H.R. Willoughby *The Four Gospels of Karahissar*, Chicago 1936 Vol II p 73. The Georgian 12th century Gelati Gospels (Q. 908) illustrates 244 miniatures and the second Djrutchi Gospels 359 (Georgian Academy of Sciences H 1667), for which see ed. V. Beridze, *Georgian Manuscripts*, 1970, Introduction p. 41. A. Carr, *The Rockefeller McCormick New Testament: Studies towards the Reattribution of Chicago, Univ. Lib., MS 965*, Univ. of Michigan PhD., 1973 (University Microfilm) pp 144 ff assembles a preliminary list of Greek MSS of the late 12th-late 13th centuries with narrative New Testament cycles.

²⁶ Illustrated in Leroy, *MSS Coptes-Arabes*. Pls. 45(1), 51(3), 45(1), respectively. For comparable scenes in the Laurentian Gospels, cf. Velmans, *Tétraévangile*, Pl. 7 fig. 14 (fol. 7r), Pl. 18 fig. 65 (fol. 31r), Pl. 8 fig. 15 (fol. 7v).

²⁷ Shenouda, *Copte 13* p 203 refers to K. Weitzmann, *Illustrations in Roll and Codex* (Studies in Manuscript Illumination 2), Princeton, 1947 rept. 1970 p. 24 and passim.

²⁸ Leroy, *MSS Coptes-Arabes* p. 125, Pl. 52(2); Shenouda, *Copte 13* pp. 83-5; Velmans, *Tétraévangile* p. 29 and Pl. 21, figs. 78-9

superimposed onto an illustration of three churches in a rocky landscape, with the three apostles added below and the hand of God above.²⁹ This suggests eclecticism rather than conflation, especially as the same scene reappears far more economically in Luke's Gospel (fol. 167v) with simply the three apostles before Christ.³⁰ Other scenes in the MS feature unusual, even unique interpretations of Gospel scenes, which also argue against the too precise following of models. The figure of Caiaphas rending his garment in the scene of Christ before the Sanhedrin (fol. 80r) is derived from middle Byzantine art, but elsewhere than the late 11th. century Gospels.³¹ The hovering invalids and the angel in the Healing at the Pool of Bethesda (fol. 233r) are included by the artist, although there is no basis for them in the text of the Coptic Gospels.³² Finally, several scenes cannot even be explained with reference to Byzantine models, such as the Closing of the Tomb of Christ with a Stone (fol. 214v), which is an idiosyncrasy of the Coptic New Testament text.³³

Other Oriental Christian Gospel MSS of the 12th-13th. centuries share with Copte 13 the direct influence of Greek cycles, which suggests a wider context for Copte 13 itself. The two 12th. century Georgian MSS, the Gospels of Gelati and Djroutchi are themselves closely related to the Paris MS,³⁴ while the Laurentian MS, perhaps the slightly later of the Greek Gospels, was at some time copied by an Armenian scribe, as the copyist's notes in Armenian in the margin of two folios and the Armenian numbering propose.³⁵ This is corroborated by the evidence of an Armenian Gospel book in Erevan (Matenadaran No. 7651) which was copied from the Laurentian MS

²⁹ Leroy, *MSS Coptes-Arabes* pp. 124-5, Pl. 52(1); Shenouda, *Copte 13* pp 77-83 himself suggested a variety of parallels for different elements in the scene derived from different media and dating between the 6th and 13th. centuries.

³⁰ Leroy, *MSS Coptes-Arabes* p. 137 and Pl. 65(2).

³¹ H. Maguire, 'The Depiction of Sorrow in middle Byzantine Art', *D.O.P.* 31 (1977) p. 131 and fig. 9 (MS Paris, B.N. gr. 510 fol. 3r).

³² Shenouda, *Copte 13* pp. 183-4, 216; Leroy, *MSS Coptes-Arabes* Pl. 70 (2).

³³ Shenouda, *Copte 13* pp. 163-5; Leroy, *MSS Coptes-Arabes* Pl. 67(1).

³⁴ Millet, *Recherches* pp. 588-9; Der Nersessian, 'Paris Gr. 74' p. 116.

³⁵ Millet, *Recherches* p. 569; Velmans, *Tétraévangile* p. 12.

between the mid-13th. century and the early 14th.³⁶ Other 12th. century Greek Gospel books are known to have been in the hands of Eastern Christian scribes, such as the Codex Ebnerianus (Oxford, Bodleian Auct. T. inf. 1. 10) which is numbered in Georgian letters.³⁷ Whether this copying took place in the Christian East or at Constantinople is not known; it simply confirms the supposition that Georgian and Armenian scribes and artists relied directly on Greek MSS. Syriac manuscripts also reflect the upsurge in New Testament illustration during the 12th-13th. centuries, in Bible, Gospel and Lectionary MSS; and the activity of the monastery of Deir es Suriani in the Wadi Natrûn attests to the continuing Syrian Jacobite artistic presence in Egypt.³⁸

Painting in Egypt was not immune to such external contracts prior to the late 12th. century, even if Copte 13 represents a new departure in the scale and extent of its narrative illustration. Indeed, leaving aside New Testament iconography, Byzantine influence is evident in several MSS, amongst them a miniature in a late 9th. century MS of the Pauline Epistles in Leningrad (Public Library Cod. Arab. N.F. 327 fol. 226r) argued by Professor Weitzmann to represent Paul with Timothy.³⁹ The Bodleian MS Huntington 17 of 1173 includes accompanied Evangelist portraits decorated only a few years before Copte 13, and is the earliest of several such MSS produced in Egypt during the Ayyûbid period.⁴⁰ In addition to the Syrian presence, the influence of the Armenian community made itself felt throughout the Fâtîmid period. This is evident as early as 1124 in the apse painting of the church of Deir el-Abiad at Sohag.⁴¹ As far as evidence for the presence

³⁶ S. Der Nersessian, *Armenian MSS in the Freer Gallery of Art*, Washington 1963 p. 44; illustrated in L.A. Durnovo, *Armenian Miniatures*, London 1961 pp. 104 ff.

³⁷ I. Hutter, *Corpus der byzantinischen Miniaturenhandscriften* Bd. 1 Oxford Bodleian Library 1, Stuttgart 1977 p. 59 and correction, Bd. 2 p. 310.

³⁸ White, *Monasteries* pp. 169 ff; Jules Leroy, 'Le Décor de L'Église du Couvent des Syriens au Ouady Natroum (Égypte)', C.A. XXIII, 1964 pp. 151-167.

³⁹ K. Weitzmann, 'An Early Copto-Arabic Miniature in Leningrad', A.I. 1943 pp. 119-134; Leroy, *MSS Coptes-Arabs* No. IV pp. 92-4, Pl. 28(1).

⁴⁰ J. Uri, *Bibliothecae Bodleianae codicum manuscriptorum orientalium catalogus* I, Oxford 1787 No. 5 p. 319; Horner, *Northern Dialect* Vol. I pp. xxxviii-xl; Buchthal and Kurz, *Hand List* p. 52; Leroy, *MSS Coptes-Arabs* No. XV pp. 110-113, Pls. 39-40.

⁴¹ U. Monneret de Villard, *Les Couvents près de Sohag* Milan 1925-6 p. 133, figs. 11-14; J. Leroy, *Les*

of Armenian Gospel books in Egypt is concerned, the Armenian writer known as Abū Ṣāliḥ writing at the turn of the 13th. century records that when Saladin took Egypt in 1172 the Armenian Patriarch fled from Egypt to Jerusalem taking with him 'seventy-five sacred books, among which was a copy of the four Gospels with illuminations in colours and gold, representing the miracles of Christ'.⁴² This is a further indication of the artistic influence of other Oriental Christian communities in Egypt during the 12th. century, Armenian as well as Syrian.⁴³ Thus aspects of the illustration of MS Copte 13 can be attributed to the precedents of early Christian and Byzantine cycles of the later 11th. century, and the MS must be viewed in the light of a wider phenomenon of New Testament illustration in the Christian East from the late 11th. to the 13th. centuries.

If, then, the cycle of Copte 13 reflects a response within Coptic Church patronage to the more general upsurge of New Testament illumination amongst the Byzantine and the other Oriental Christian churches, the circumstances of the production of the MS itself need to be further examined. Particular monastic, or Church reform movements have been proposed as influencing the emphasis on illuminated Bible texts. In the case of MS Paris Gr. 74, aspects of its narrative cycle, especially the attention given to representations of St. John the Baptist, endorse the attribution of the MS to the Studios Monastery in Constantinople.⁴⁴ In the Latin West, the Gregorian Reform move-

Peintures des Couvents du Désert d'Esna, Cairo 1975 p. 48 and Pl. VII; H. Torp, 'La Date de la Fondation du Monastère d'Apa Apollo de Baouît et de son Abandon', *Mélanges d'Archéologie et d'histoire* (Rome) 77, 1965 pp 153-177, esp. 172 ff suggested that the Armenian artist Theodore, mentioned in the inscription on the Eastern apse painting at Sohag was also responsible for the now destroyed column paintings of the North Church at Bawit, which themselves reflect the influence of Commene painting. Torp's view was not accepted by C.C. Walters, *Monastic Archaeology in Egypt*, Warminster 1974 pp. 288-9, although Walters does not present a detailed case for a pre-12th. century date for the Bawit paintings.

⁴² Abū Ṣāliḥ, *Churches and Monasteries* fols. 2b-3a, pp. 5-6.

⁴³ The Armenian community was established in Egypt from the late 10th. century through the Fātimid period; M. Canard, 'Un Vizir Chrétien à l'époque fātimite: L'Arménien Bahrām', *A.I.E.O.* XII 1954 pp. 84 ff; idem, 'Notes sur les Arméniens en Egypte à l'époque fatimite', *A.I.E.O.* XIII. 1955 pp. 143 ff; White, *Monasteries II* pp. 356 ff.

⁴⁴ Der Nersessian, Paris Gr. 74', pp. 114-5; Dufrenne, 'Miniature' pp. 187-190 considers Gr. 74 to de-

ment has been suggested as the main inspiration behind the emergence of the giant illustrated Bible, chiefly in France and Italy, also towards the end of the 11th. century.⁴⁵ Were there any such specific circumstances prompting the illustration of MS Copte 13?

In order to answer this question, it is necessary to turn to the frontispieces (figs. 1-3). The present makeup and arrangement of the frontispieces is different from that of the original MS, as only two of the original bifolia survive intact in the Paris MS. Today the Gospels are preceded by two full-page frontispiece portraits, of the 73th. Coptic Patriarch Mark (fol. 1r) and Christ (fol. 2v), while a third frontispiece of the Four Evangelists was at some time detached from the MS, and is now in the Freer Gallery of Art in Washington (No. 55,11).⁴⁶ A reconsideration of the frontispieces is necessary, relative to their original position in the MS, the information yielded by their inscriptions and the nature of the illustrations themselves.

All three frontispieces (figs. 1-3) are drawn in the same carefully etched style, employing the same wide range of colours as the Gospel scenes. Each is framed with a canopy above and is accompanied by elaborate and informative inscriptions. These comprise a simple cursive (nashki) inscription identifying the portrait over the canopy, and an ornamental nashki inscription framing the whole picture, starting at the upper right corner and continuing anticlockwise around the border. The Patriarch Mark (fig. 1) is shown seated, facing to the right, holding a cross-staff in his left hand and blessing with his right, accompanied by a black priest, considered by Shenouda to be the scribe

rive from the same monastic milieu as the Psalter B.L. Add. 19352. The relationship between the Paris and Laurentian Gospels is considered by S. Tsuji, *The Study of the Byzantine Gospel Illustrations in Florence. Laur. Plut. VI 23 and Paris Bibl. Nat. Cod. Gr. 74*, PhD thesis, Princeton 1968 (Univ. Microfilms), passim.

⁴⁵ P.H. Brieger, 'Bible Illustration and Gregorian Reform', *Studies in Church History* II (1965) pp. 154-164. Brieger makes the point that the original impetus was to reassert the significance of the Old Testament in conjunction with the New, and (p. 164) once this had been achieved by the mid-12th century, 'a new chapter in the history of exegesis had begun which gave new directions to the choice of subject and its interpretation'.

⁴⁶ Shenouda, *Copte 13* pp. 17 ff; Leroy, 'Un Feuillet du ms Copte 13' pp. 437-446 and Pls. I-II; idem *MSS Coptes-Arabes* pp. 113-116 and Pls 41-3.

Michael,⁴⁷ even though mention is made of Michael only in the inscription accompanying Christ's portrait. The Patriarch is named in the inscription above his head and in the border.⁴⁸ Christ (fol. 2v, fig. 2) appears half turned towards the right, holding the Gospels in his left hand and with his right hand raised in a beckoning gesture. His face has been redrawn, but like the other frontispieces this one is otherwise well preserved. The inscription above his head refers to Christ, while the ornate nashki inscription refers to Michael, who 'wrote these four holy Gospels and illustrated them and bound them'.⁴⁹ The Freer Gallery frontispiece shows the four Evangelists stooping towards the left, bearing their Gospel books or, in one case, a scroll (fig. 3).⁵⁰ The ornamental cross on the verso is comparable though without inscriptions, with those on folios 88v and 219v preceding the Gospels of Mark and John respectively, and is virtually identical with the interlace cross of the Bodleian MS Hunt. 17 frontispiece, with Christ and St. Matthew.⁵¹

The Freer Gallery Evangelist portrait evidently faced the portrait of Christ originally, as Leroy recognised, but examination of the remaining folios suggests that there has been further tampering with the original arrangement of the frontispiece illustrations. It is unlikely that the portrait of Mark preceded that of Christ, as is the case at present, and some rearrangement of the existing order of the frontispieces can be proposed. The present first two folios of the Paris MS are a bifolium, but have been reversed, so that the inscription of ownership of the MS to the Church of the Theotokos in Damietta now appears on fol. 2r, instead of heading the MS as might be expected. Next, the portrait of Christ has been reversed from fol. 1v to fol. 2v, and the four Evangelists can be restored facing (formerly fol. 2r). The cross which would have followed on fol. 2v has lost its accompanying facing page,

⁴⁷ Shenouda, *Copte* 13 pp. 19-20. For the association of the Patriarch with Christ, see below note 85.

⁴⁸ Leroy, 'Un Feuillet du ms Copte 13' p. 440 and *MSS Coptes-Arabes* p. 114 gives a translation of the inscriptions.

⁴⁹ Inscriptions translated in Leroy, 'Un Feuillet du ms Copte 13' p. 440, and *MSS Coptes-Arabes* p. 114.

⁵⁰ Inscriptions translated in Leroy, 'Un Feuillet du ms Copte 13' p. 442; and *MSS Coptes-Arabes* p. 115.

⁵¹ Leroy, *MSS Coptes-Arabes* p. 60 and Pl. 4(1-2) for Copte 13 and pp. 110-111 and Pl. 39 (1) for

which perhaps had a dedicatory inscription or a matching cross on the recto, preceding a portrait on fol. 3v facing the Patriarch in his original position of fol. 4r. Differing from Shenouda, Leroy proposed that this missing portrait depicted the scribe Michael.⁵² Thus the frontispieces were originally arranged in such a way that Christ was depicted receiving the Gospels from the four Evangelists across facing folios, while the contemporary Coptic Patriarch faced a now lost portrait perhaps of the scribe, or as I will suggest, a group of Coptic bishops.

It is through the career of the scribe and artist Michael, Metropolitan of Damietta, that these unique frontispiece portraits, and hence the original purpose of the MS itself, can be interpreted. Michael is known as one of the leading theologians of his day, and wrote, among other works, a treatise on Confession and texts codifying Coptic theology.⁵³ Further, his work as a Canonist is related to the controversy between him and the Jacobite reformer, Mark Ibn al-Ḳanbar.⁵⁴ The works of Ibn al-Ḳanbar do not survive, but something can be deduced of his theological opinions from the negative polemics against him. A priest in lower Egypt, a learned and apparently prolific writer, Ibn al-Ḳanbar initiated a movement directed towards the reform of liturgical practice and customs within the Coptic Church, including confession, tonsure and circumcision.⁵⁵ His theological position moved towards that of the diophysite Melkites, with whom he eventually allied himself, in the Delta area of Egypt where his support was concentrated. He was twice excommunicated by the Coptic Patriarch and his plea to the Muslim civil authorities was turned down.⁵⁶ The case became so serious that the Patriarch Mark III wrote to the Bishops of Northern

Hunt. 17; Cramer, *Koptische Buchmalerei* p. 79, Abb XI.

⁵² Leroy, *MSS Coptes-Arabes* p. 212.

⁵³ Le Quien, *Oriens Christianus* Paris 1740 Vol. II p. 592; Renaudot, *Hist. Patr.* pp. 552-3 J.M. Vansleb, *Histoire de l'Eglise d'Alexandrie*, Paris 1677 p. 333; Abū Ṣāliḥ, *Churches and Monasteries* p. 33. See Shenouda, *Copte 13* pp. 6-8 and Leroy, *MSS Coptes-Arabes* p. 146.

⁵⁴ Graf, *Reformversuch* passim esp. pp. 121 ff discusses the basis of the controversy and gives a translation of the relevant texts on pp. 135 ff; Ibn al-Ḳanbar's theological beliefs are described, pp. 26 ff and 35 ff. Abū Ṣāliḥ, *Churches and Monasteries* fols. 9a-17a, pp. 20-43.

⁵⁵ Abū Ṣāliḥ, *Churches and Monasteries*, esp. fols. 9a-9b, pp. 20-3 and fols. 14b-17a, pp. 35-43 refers to Ibn al-Ḳanbar's beliefs, theological works and translations from Coptic into Arabic.

⁵⁶ Abū Ṣāliḥ, *Churches and Monasteries* fols. 11a-11b, pp. 26-7.

Egypt condemning Ibn al-Ḳanbar and eliciting their loyalty. Each bishop then returned an account of Ibn al-Ḳanbar's breaches of Church law which condoned his excommunication. This is recounted by 'Abū Ṣāliḥ' whose account of the whole affair is apparently based on the denunciation of Ibn al-Ḳanbar written by Michael of Damietta himself, as a response to the Patriarch's request.⁵⁷ Moreover, it was not only the Coptic Bishops who wrote condemnations of Ibn al-Ḳanbar. It is recorded that the Jacobite Patriarch of Antioch wrote a similar letter to the Coptic Patriarch against Ibn al-Ḳanbar during a visit to Jerusalem in 1179.⁵⁸ This not only points to the defensive position of the Coptic Patriarch, but also gives the date of 1179 which exactly corresponds to the time (1178-80) that Michael of Damietta was at work on MS Copte 13. A MS of the Gospels, surely Copte 13, is associated with Michael of Damietta in the History of the Patriarchs.⁵⁹ I should like to suggest, therefore, that the MS was produced as a direct response to the Patriarch's plea for support of the orthodox Monophysite Coptic cause against the strongly mounting popularity of Ibn al-Ḳanbar's reform movement in lower Egypt.

This argument explains features of both the MS's frontispiece and Gospel illustrations. Following the double portrait of the four Evangelists offering their portraits to Christ was perhaps a parallel portrait of bishops of Northern Egypt offering their statements of loyalty to the 73r. Patriarch, who accepts them with a similar gesture to that of Christ. The black ecclesiastic accompanying the Patriarch can then either, as Shenouda proposed, be identified with Michael holding his completed Gospel book in his hand or with the Metropolitan or, more likely, a priest of Ethiopia or Nubia, the areas under the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the Coptic Church referred to in the nashki inscription framing the Patriarch's portrait. Furthermore, since the wording of this inscription closely relates to the prologues to St. Mark's

⁵⁷ Abū Ṣāliḥ, *Churches and Monasteries* fols. 10b-11a, pp. 25-6 and fol. 14a p. 33.

⁵⁸ J-B Chabot, *Chronique de Michel Le Syrien*, Paris 1899-1910 (Repr. Brussels 1963) Vol. IV p. 720. transl. Vol. III p. 379; F. Nau, 'Sur quelques autographes de Michel le Syrien Patriarch d'Antioch', *Révue de l'Orient Chrétien* 1914 pp. 379-80, referred to by E. Cerulli, *Etiopi in Palestina* Vol. I. Rome 1943 pp. 16-17.

⁵⁹ Renaudot, *Hist. Patr.* p. 553; Shenouda, Copte 13, p. 8

Gospel in Coptic Gospel books of the 12th-13th. centuries, the association of the Patriarch Mark III with the Apostle is unmistakeable.⁶⁰ The MS is thus intended to reinforce the traditional authority of the Coptic Church. The often scrupulously literal interpretation of the Coptic text in the Gospel illustrations can also be seen as an assertion of the authority of the Gospels.⁶¹ Thus MS Copte 13 can be attributed to the reassertion of orthodoxy by the Patriarch Mark in the face of Ibn al-Ḳanbar's 'heretical' reform movement. It may be added that the Patriarch was not immediately successful. A further encounter took place in 1186, after which Ibn al-Ḳanbar was sent to the monastery of al-Ḳusair where he eventually died in 1208 after continuing to 'dispute with all communities', both Coptic and Melkite.⁶²

It is ironical, given Michael's anti-Melkite stand, that the orthodox Coptic MS Copte 13 should depend so heavily on illuminated Greek MSS, both for its frontispieces and Gospel scenes, as does Syriac illumination. Certain features comparable with Copte 13's portraits can be found in near-contemporary Coptic Evangelist portraits, especially the association of Matthew with Christ in fol. 1v of MS Bodleian Hunt. 17.⁶² Christ and the Evangelists appear grouped in bust form in the centre and around the arms of an interlace cross decorating

⁶⁰ See above note 48 for inscriptions of the Patriarch's portrait. The main inscription refers to Mark as 'Patriarch of the great city of Alexandria, Egypt, Ethiopia, Nubia and the Pentapolis'. The latter can be identified as the Libyan Pentapolis in Cyrenaica under the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the Coptic Church in the early Christian period, cf. A.H.M. Jones, *The Later Roman Empire 284-602*, Oxford 1964, Vol. II pp. 883-4 and A.S. Atiya, *A History of Eastern Christianity*, London, 1968 p. 435. Evetts notes in Abū Ṣāliḥ, *Churches and Monasteries* p. 33 n. 5 that in the late 12th Century Damietta was one of only three seats of Metropolitans under the Coptic Patriarch, with Jerusalem and Ethiopia. For the relevant phrase in the text of the prologue to St. Mark's Gospel, relating to the Apostle's preaching of his Gospel in these places, see Horner, *Northern Dialect*, especially p. li (MS Paris, B.N. Copte 16 of A.D. 1196) and p. lxxvii (MS London, B.L. Or. 1315 of A.D. 1208). It is not without significance that later in his Patriarchate, Mark III vetoed the appointment of a Melkite, favoured by the Sultan al-'Adil, to the office of Metropolitan of Ethiopia, Khater, Burmester, *Hist. Patr.* p. 207.

⁶¹ The same point has been made with respect to the illustration of MS Paris, Gr. 74; Der Nersessian, 'Paris Gr. 74' pp. 109 ff.

⁶² Abū Ṣāliḥ, *Churches and Monasteries* fol. 13b pp 32-3 and fols. 51a-b. p. 152.

⁶³ See above, note 51.

a page inserted into MS Vat. Copte 9 (fol. 20v) with an inscription dating it to A.M. 921/A.D. 1204-5 while the Evangelist portraits in the same MS are accompanied, with the standing St. Matthew presenting his book to Christ (fol. 22r, fig. 4).⁶⁴ However, these standing Evangelist figures ultimately derive from Byzantine illumination. One such Presentation portrait survives in the MS Vat. Gr. 756 (fols. 11v-12r, fig. 5) in which the Evangelists are shown in two registers opposite the standing Christ on the recto. Buchthal suggested that this MS was in Jerusalem during the late 12th. century, where it served as a model for the portrait of the standing Evangelists in the Crusader MS Vat. Lat. 5974 (fol. 3v).⁶⁵ This Crusader MS, however, omits the figure of Christ and therefore cannot itself have served as a model for Copte 13.⁶⁶ A parallel instance of the influence of MS. Vat. Gr. 756 appears in the standing portraits of Christ and an Evangelist, very probably St. Matthew, at the end of the Syriac New Testament, Paris Bibl. Nat. Syr. 41 made at the monastery of Qarṭamīn in c. A.D. 1190 (fig. 6).⁶⁷ The standing Evangelist in this Syriac manuscript itself bears a very close resemblance to the Copte 13 Evangelists of a decade earlier. The influence of the Greek MS, then, was felt as directly on the art of the churches of Egypt and Syria, as on Crusader MS painting during the 12th. century.

⁶⁴ Leroy, *MSS Coptes-Arabes* No. XVIII pp. 148-153, Pls. 100-104, A.H. Cramer, *Koptische Buchmalerei* pp. 76-7, Abb. X-XIII, 87,98. The frontispiece page with Christ and the Evangelists has been backed, and inserted after a quire that ends at fol. 19v, between the Canon tables and the Evangelist portrait preceding Matthew's Gospel. The manuscript itself and its remaining illustrations may be slightly later in date, but still within the first quarter of the 13th century. The derivation of the Vat. Copto 9 Evangelist portraits from Byzantine models has recently been reasserted by R.S. Nelson, *The Iconography of Preface and Miniature in the Byzantine Gospel Book*, New York 1980 pp. 84, 86.

⁶⁵ H. Buchthal, *Miniature Painting in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem*, Oxford 1957 p. 26, Pl. 40.

⁶⁶ The quiring of MS Vat. Lat. 5974 opens with two quaternions, so there is no page missing following the Evangelist portrait page and Canon tables follow on fol. 4r. I am grateful to Prof. Valentino Pace for this information.

⁶⁷ Leroy, *MSS Syriacques* No. XI pp. 254-5, Pl. 56(1-2). Other Presentation portraits in Byzantine, Syriac and Armenian MSS are referred to by Leroy, *MSS Copte-Arabes* p. 224. For MS Jerusalem-Armenian Patr. 1796, cf. Ed. B. Narkiss, *Armenian Art Treasures of Jerusalem* Oxford 1980 p. 148 and fig. 57, (fol. 288v).

The illustration of Copte 13 also provides a link with Arab secular art of the 12th-13th. centuries. The Gospel scenes in particular have been associated with Islamic art, to the extent that the MS is assumed to be representative of a now lost tradition of late 12th. century Islamic illumination.⁶⁸ Secular elements in the MS include particular figure types, such as cross-legged seated rulers like Herod in the Massacre of the Innocents (fol. 6v) and Pilate in the scene of Joseph of Arimathea asking for the body of Christ (fol. 131r).⁶⁹ The Beheading of John the Baptist (fol. 103r) and the Marriage of Cana (fol. 224v) show drinking figures comparable with painting of the Fāṭimid period from the bath of Su'ūd in Fuṣṭāt and the ceiling of the Cappella Palatina in Palermo, of the mid-12th century.⁷⁰ The third temptation of Christ (fol. 9v) pays especial attention to narrative genre details of architecture and animals,⁷¹ and numerous such details of animals and plants in the MS can be placed alongside illustrations in early 13th century Arab MSS of the *Maḳāmāt* of al-Harīrī and *Kalīla wa Dimna* or Fables of Bidpai. Just one instance is the similarity of the whale from the Copte 13 scene of

⁶⁸ Buchthal, '«Hellenistic» Miniatures' p. 133 proposed that 'it seems highly probable that as early as 1180 A.D. a syncretistic pictorial tradition existed with the Arabs in Syria, Mediterranean in character, though Islamic in its outward appearance'; R. Ettinghausen, 'Painting in the Fatimid Period: A Reconstruction', *A.I.* 9 (1942) p. 122; Ettinghausen, *Arab Painting* p. 59; Leroy, *MSS Coptes-Arabes* pp. 222-8 with earlier references to the debate concerning the artistic role of the Jacobite churches.

⁶⁹ Illustrated in Leroy, *MSS Coptes-Arabes* Pls. 45(1) and 60(2) respectively. A similar ruler figure appears in the Syriac Lectionaries, London B.L. 7170 and the dated Vatican Syr. 559 of 1219-20, cf. Leroy, *MSS Syriacques* pp. 292-3, Pl. 89(4).

⁷⁰ Leroy, *MSS Coptes-Arabes* Pls. 59(2) and 69(2) illustrate the Coptes 13 scenes. *Islamic Art in Egypt 969-1517*, Exhibition Catalogue, Cairo 1969 p. 213, inv. no. 12881 describes the bath painting, an alcove figure painted in red and black on a white ground, within a beaded frame. Numerous drinking figures from the Cappella Palatina ceiling paintings are illustrated in Monneret, *Cappella Palatina*. One of these is reproduced with the bath painting, in D. Talbot Rice, *Islamic Painting*, Edinburgh 1971 p. 44 (Pl. 11a-b). The most recent studies on the Cappella Palatina ceiling are those of A. Simon Cahn, *A Study of the Cosmological Significance of the Iconography on the Ceiling of the Palatine Chapel in Palermo*, PhD thesis, Columbia University 1971, D. Jones, 'The Cappella Palatina in Palermo: Problems of Attribution' *Art and Archaeology Research Papers* 2 (1972) pp. 41 ff. and Ettinghausen, *Arab Painting* pp. 44-50 with earlier bibliographies. The motif of drinkers with musicians etc. in Fāṭimid ceramics has been associated with a princely or pleasureable cycle by Grabar 'Subject Matter' pp. 21-2 and with a banquet theme by Philon, *Early Islamic Ceramics* p. 170.

⁷¹ Illustrated in Leroy, *MSS Coptes-Arabes* Pl. 46(2).

Peter and the Tribute money (fol. 50r) to the gaping creature in the illustration of Barzuya's Allegory of the Human Condition in the Paris Bidpai MS (B.N. Ar. 3465, fol. 43v) of the first third of the 13th century, usually attributed to Syria, but perhaps also made in Egypt.⁷²

The frontispiece portraits of Copte 13 have been less discussed, although they propose connexions between Byzantine and Islamic art which are indicative of the relevance of Copte 13 both to secular art of the Ayyūbid period and Coptic Church patronage of the time. First, the framing of an arch with decorated spandrels, bordered by nashki inscriptions interwoven with a continuous design of foliage scrolls, is comparable with Islamic ornament in a variety of media from the middle and late 12th century. Similar foliage scrolls are lightly drawn on garments in the Cappella Palatina paintings, in which drinkers frequently each hold a trilobe leaf of the same shape as those bordering the Copte 13 frontispieces.⁷³ This leaf is also common in Fātimid and Ayyūbid lustreware, such as the bowl in the Freer Gallery of Art which Dr. Atil suggests is from Syria.⁷⁴ Similar decorative nashki inscriptions frame the frontispieces, colophons and text illustrations of the Pseudo-Galen *Book of Antidotes* in Paris (B.N. arabe 2964) which dates to A.H. 595/A.D. 1199 and is attributed to Mosul. Nashki inscriptions, together with geometric spandrel ornament, also appear in Ayyūbid and early Mamlūk woodwork.⁷⁶

Several double frontispieces in secular Arabic MSS currently attributed to Northern Mesopotamia or Syria, depicting philosophers, writers and students, compare with Copte 13 in their layout and in as-

⁷² Holter, 'Miniaturhandschriften vor 1350' No. 26 p. 11; Buchthal, Kurz, Ettinghausen, 'Supplementary Notes' p. 151 with earlier bibliographies; Buchthal, '«Hellenistic» Miniatures' passim; Papadopoulos, *Esthétique de l'Art Musulman II* pp. 637 ff (Vol. V figs. 172-185). I hope to argue elsewhere the attribution of the MS to Egypt, on the basis of comparison with MS Paris Institut Catholique Copte-Arabe I. It is also significant that the MS is numbered in Coptic letters.

⁷³ For example, the ruler illustrated in Ettinghausen, *Arab Painting* p. 45.

⁷⁴ E. Atil, *Art of the Arab World*, Washington 1975, p. 49 no. 18.

⁷⁵ B. Farès, *Le Livre de la Thériaque*, Cairo 1953 passim, esp. description of the MS, pp. 2 ff and plates; Ettinghausen, *Arab Painting* pp. 83-6.

⁷⁶ For example, a panel from the Mausoleum of Saiyada Nafisa, now in the Islamic Museum in Cairo. G. Wiet, *Album du Musée du Caire*, Cairo 1930, No. 29, inv. no. 1655.

pects of each portrait. The Dioscorides MS of the *De Materia Medica* in Istanbul (Topkapi Sarayı Müzesi, Ahmet III, 2127) made in A.H. 626/A.D. 1229 contains frontispieces of Dioscorides with students (fols. 1v-2r, fig. 7).⁷⁷ These portraits can be derived from Greek illumination, as Ettinghausen pointed out in describing them as 'Byzantine art in Islamic garb'.⁷⁸ While the portrait of Dioscorides represents a turbaned version of an Evangelist portrait, the students are descended from the Evangelist of MS Vat. Gr. 756 (fig. 5) or a similar Greek MS. A comparable MS is that of *The Choicest Maxims and Best Sayings* of al-Mubashshir (Topkapi Sarayı Müzesi Ahmet III, 3206) attributed by Ettinghausen to early 13th century Syria, which contains finispieces of authors against a decorative background. They wear hooded cloaks as the Copte 13 Patriarch and gesticulate to each other, as is common in the Copte 13 Gospel scenes.⁷⁹

The Patriarch Mark III can be further likened to particular figures in secular Arabic MSS. He sits with one leg tucked up, again as Herod in the Gospel scenes, in the pose of rulers or judges in the Arabic MSS. The ecclesiastical overgarment with its tall hood reappears worn by Abū Zayd in the guise of a pilgrim in the illustration to the first makama of the *Maḳāmāt* in Paris (Bibl. Nat. 6094, fol. 6r fig. 8) dated to A.H. 619/A.D. 1222-3 by inscriptions on two of the miniatures (fols. 67r and 68r) and again attributed to Syria,⁸⁰ and the figure of an ascetic in the Ayyūbid Bidpai MS (fol. 115v).⁸¹

⁷⁷ Grube, 'Dioskorides Arabicus' No. VIII pp. 178-9, with earlier bibliography; Ettinghausen, *Arab Painting* pp. 67-74.

⁷⁸ Grube, 'Dioskorides Arabicus' No. VIII, pp. 78-9; Ettinghausen, *Arab Painting* pp. 67 ff refers to the influence of the 6th. century Vienna Dioscorides (Nationalbibl. Cod. Med. gr. 1) and Evangelist portraits in middle Byzantine Gospels; Leroy, *MSS Syriaques* p. 100 suggests that the scribe of this MS was a Jacobite Christian. For Byzantine influence in Arabic Dioscorides MSS in general, K. Weitzmann, 'The Greek Sources of Islamic Scientific illustrations' in *Studies in Classical and Byzantine Illustration*, ed. H.L. Kessler, Chicago 1971 pp. 25 ff.

⁷⁹ Ettinghausen, *Arab Painting* pp. 74-79, with an illustration of one of the finispieces (fol. 173v) on p. 75.

⁸⁰ Holter, 'Miniaturhandschriften vor 1350' no. 25 p. 11; Buchthal, Kurz, Ettinghausen, 'Supplementary Notes' no. 25 p. 151 with earlier bibliographies; Buchthal, '«Hellenistic» Miniatures' passim; Papadopoulos, *Esthétique de l'Art Musulman*, II pp. 667 ff (Vol. V figs. 186-201).

⁸¹ Buchthal, '«Hellenistic» Miniatures' fig. 34.

The closest parallels to the Copte 13 Patriarch Mark are, however, found in MSS of the second third of the 13th century from Baghdād. The frontispiece of Book 3 of a Dioscorides MS in Oxford (Bodleian Lib. Arab. d. 138), known from its colophon to have been made in Baghdād in AH 637/A.D. 1239, depicts Dioscorides (fol. 2v, fig. 9) holding his book, opposite the opening text of Chapter 3.⁸² While the head of Dioscorides has been clumsily redrawn, it is evident that his garments are based on ecclesiastical robes, including the stole; and the turn of his figure and position of the hands are very close to Copte 13's Patriarch. A related author portrait in an Arabic MS is that of Ibn Baḫṭīṣhū, who appears accompanied by a facing portrait of a student in the MS of his works now in London (B.L. Or. 2784, fols. 2v-3r, fig. 10) which has been attributed to Baghdād around the end of the first quarter of the 13th century.⁸³ Ibn Baḫṭīṣhū wears, in common with the Oxford Dioscorides, a halo and stole, but relates more closely to the Copte 13 Patriarch in several ways. He is shown against a background of scrolls seemingly adapted from the Copte 13 border inscriptions and wears the same hooded cape, and holds a staff, although it looks more like a flabellum of the type which appears in near-contemporary Syriac illumination.⁸⁴ His face and beard are finely drawn like those of the Patriarch, and he is barefoot. These particular comparisons of authors in Arabic MSS with the Copte 13 Patriarch suggest that it was the specifically Coptic ecclesiastical figure which proved most appropriate for adaptation in secular frontispieces.⁸⁵

⁸² Buchthal, Kurz, Ettinghausen, 'Supplementary Notes' No. 11 p. 164; Grube, 'Dioskorides Arabicus' No. IX and fig. 9.

⁸³ MS B.L. Or. 2784 (old Suppl. 778) is described by Ch. Rieu, *Supplement to the Catalogue of Arabic MSS in the British Museum* Vol. II, London 1894 pp. 531-2; Holter, 'Miniaturhandschriften vor 1350' No. 33 p. 14; Buchthal, Kurz, Ettinghausen, 'Supplementary Notes' p. 153; Buchthal, 'Miniatures from Baghdād' pp. 34 ff (figs. 34-6, 39, 41) argues this attribution and dating, which is followed by Papadopoulos, *Esthétique de l'Art Musulman* Vol. II pp. 803 ff (Vol. V figs. 271-79),

⁸⁴ Priests hold flabella in two ordination miniatures in the Syriac Pontifical (MS Paris, B.N. Syr. 112) of 1238/9, for which Leroy, *MSS Syriacques* pp. 332 ff, Pls. 111 (2) and 112 (2). Sculpted priest figures holding crosses appear in the 13th. century Syrian church of Mar Behnam near Mosul, E. Herzfeld, *Die Malereien von Samarra*, Berlin 1927 p. 89. The criss-cross design of Ibn Baḫṭīṣhū's tunic repeats the ornamental bands of the priest figure on the lustreware bowl in the V. and A. Museum, London, considered below, and fig. 11.

⁸⁵ The Copte 13 Patriarch more closely parallels portraits of Christ than Byzantine ecclesiastical por-

The frontispieces of Copte 13 also offer a point of departure for other works of art, not previously considered in the context of late 12th century Coptic church patronage. The figure of a priest on a lustreware bowl in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London (fig. 11) may be considered in the light of the Copte 13 portrait of the Patriarch.⁸⁶ The similarity includes the hooded tunic, the position of the hands, and the ornamental scrolls and long sleeves; the spiky ornamental tree appears in Copte 13, preceding its common occurrence in the Syriac lectionary of 1219-20 in the Vatican Library (Syr. 599) and its twin in London (B.L. Add. 7170).⁸⁷ On the basis, a similar date to Copte 13 may be proposed for the lustreware bowl, a suggestion which challenges the usual acceptance of an early 12th century date, an opinion apparently based on the prejudice that the upheavals of the early years of Saladin's rule in the 1170s reduced artistic production and caused artists to leave Egypt.⁸⁸ The three letters 'Sa'd' appear in Kufic, in reverse order, on opposite sides of the outer body, associating the bowl with a group of over twenty pieces with similar characteristics, painted with the same letters, formerly assumed to be the signature of a particular potter and designating the output of a workshop spanning the late 11th-early 12th centuries.⁸⁹ Recent work by Dr Marilyn Jenkins suggests, however, that rather than representing an identifiable group, the 'Sa'd' pieces

traits, as that of the Abbot in Paris Gr. 74, for which I. Spatharakis, *The Portrait in Byzantine Illuminated Manuscripts*, Leiden 1976 pp. 61 ff, figs. 29, 33. For this association see J.M. Vansleb, *Histoire de l'Eglise d'Alexandrie*, Paris 1677 pp 14 ff, cited by Shenouda, *Copte 13* p. 19. For illustrations of bishops and abbots in earlier Coptic art and their association with Christ, Shenouda, *Copte 13* p. 23. Leroy, *MSS Coptes-Arabs* pp. 223

⁸⁶ Victoria and Albert Museum No. C49-1952. Height 9cm, diameter 22cm. The bowl was acquired from the Kelekian collection in 1952. D. Kelekian, *The Kelekian Collection of Persian and Analogous Potteries* (1885-1910), Paris 1910 No. 6 states that it was found near Luxor. I am grateful to Dr. O. Watson for showing me the piece, and for his valuable comments.

⁸⁷ Leroy, *MSS Syriacques*, pp. 280 ff and 302 ff; Pls. 70(1-2), 71(1), 79(2), 81(1.3) etc.

⁸⁸ A. Lane, *Early Islamic Pottery* London, 1947 pp. 22-24, 38 (Pls. 26a). An early 12th. century date is accepted by D. Talbot Rice, *Islamic Art* (Rpt.), London 1979 p. 92 (fig. 92) and Badawy, *Coptic Art and Archaeology* p. 314 (fig. 4.119)

⁸⁹ The most recent discussion of the Sa'd pieces, based on those in the collection of the Benaki Museum, Athens, is by Philon, *Early Islamic Ceramics* pp. 171 ff, especially pp. 176-181. Mrs Philon acknowledges the difficulty is distinguishing Egyptian Fātimid lustreware from Syrian imitations, but favours an Egyptian origin for the Sa'd pieces.

derive from different provenances, both Egypt and Syria, and she proposes that the letters are no more than a form of blessing ('sa'ada').⁹⁰ Further, the shape and manufacture of the bowl, especially the frit body, cylindrical base and incised decoration argue for an Egyptian provenance, according to Dr Oliver Watson.⁹¹ While it is likely that the arts suffered during the transitional period of Saladin's assumption of power, there is corresponding evidence that Saladin later actually encouraged artistic production, including that of the Copts, especially with the intervention of the Patriarch Mark III himself.⁹² This raises the question of whether the bowl may be the work of Copts, or at least be attributed to Coptic patronage. The appearance of such priest figures is not unprecedented, although rare in earlier Islamic art. Standing priest figures are painted on the sides of tall jars found during the excavations of Samarra and also appear elsewhere in 'Abbāsid ceramics.⁹³ It has been argued that the appearance of priests in Fātimid art represents a small 'narrative' group amongst the varied secular repertoire.⁹⁴ However, account must be taken of other lustreware with Christian scenes, specifically a piece in the Islamic Museum in Cairo with the figure of Christ blessing.⁹⁵ Rather than being rep-

⁹⁰ Philon, *Early Islamic Ceramics* p. 176 n. 149. Dr. Watson informs me that this work is to be published in the forthcoming Ettinghausen memorial volume.

⁹¹ Personal communication. Philon, *Early Islamic Ceramics* p. 176, observes that the cylindrical foot is usual in the Sa'd pieces, although sandy paste is more common than the frit body. She compares the incised style of the V and A priest bowl with to a fragment (inv. no 423) decorated with a rider, p. 179 and fig. 489, which she dates generally to the 12th. century.

⁹² Khater, Burmester, *Hist. Patr.* pp. 164-6 (biography of the Patriarch Mark III).

⁹³ E. Herzfeld, *Die Malereien von Samarra*. Berlin 1927 pp. 85-95. Pls. LX-LXIII; D.S. Rice, 'Deacon or Drink?', *Arabica* V, 1958 pp. 15-33 argued that these were wine jars by the association of monasteries with wine making. However, robed figures also suggested to be priests appear on an 'Abbāsid lustre jar of a different shape and type, cf. G. Féhervari, 'Two Early Abbasid Luster Bowls and the Influence of Central Asia', *Oriental Art*, Vol. IX, no. 1, 1963 p. 84, fig. 12, cited by E. Atil, *Ceramics from the World of Islam*, Washington 1973 No. 4 p. 21 and illustration

⁹⁴ Grabar, 'Subject Matter', p. 23. Grabar makes no distinction between priest figures and other Christian scenes.

⁹⁵ *Musée de l'Art Arabe du Caire, La Céramique Egyptienne de l'époque Musulmane*, Basle 1922 Pl. 46. The piece is reproduced elsewhere, most recently by P. du Bourguet, *Peintures Chrétiennes*. Geneva 1980 p. 233, fig. 39. It shares the linear drawing and vegetal background motifs of the London bowl.

representative of a miscellaneous group, these pieces surely imply that there was a demand for figural lustreware for Christian usage in late 12th century Egypt, corresponding to the demand for illuminated Coptic or Copto-Arabic MSS.⁹⁶

The Copte 13 frontispieces of the Evangelists also offer a basis for comparison with other late 12th century Coptic work. Two small wooden plaques of Evangelists, one with a book, in the Musée du Louvre (fig. 12)⁹⁷ compare closely with the Evangelists of the Washington leaf in their tall, stooped etched forms. They are shown side by side, as in the late 11th century Greek dedication page (fig. 5), against a background of decorated foliage resembling the Copte 13 borders and common to other Coptic woodwork of the Ayyūbid period.⁹⁸ These are two remaining panels from a decorated door or screen or even casket, which probably showed Christ in the centre flanked by pairs of Evangelists. Although iconographically different, a similar arrangement of panels can be found decorating the front of an earlier inlaid chest at Deir es-Suriani, probably of the 10th century, where Christ Emmanuel is flanked by the Virgin and saints.⁹⁹ The

⁹⁶ Later Ayyūbid metalwork objects with Christian scenes present rather different problems; see M.S. Dimand, 'A Silver inlaid Bronze Canteen with Christian Subjects', *A.I.* I, 1933 pp. 17 ff; L.T. Schneider, 'The Freer Canteen', *Ars Orientalis* IX, 1973 pp. 137-156; E. Atil, *Art of the Arab World*, Washington 1975 No. 28, pp. 69-73 (Freer Canteen) with earlier bibliographies. These objects are associated with Mosul, but by the end of the Ayyūbid period were doubtless produced in Egypt and Syria. Schneider (p. 153) remains undecided as to whether the canteen was made for a particular patron, either Christian or Muslim, but cites D.S. Rice's earlier view that neither patrons nor artists were likely to have been Christians. These questions remain to be studied further.

⁹⁷ Département des Antiquités égyptiennes, inv. nos. E 14284 and E. 14285, made of jujube wood and bordered with a thin band of ivory. The provenance of the pieces is not known. I am grateful to Mme M.H. Rutschowskaya of the Musée du Louvre for this information, and for permission to reproduce photographs of the panels here. They are referred to in the Exhibition Catalogue *l'Art Copte*, Petit Palais, Paris 1964 p. 117, nos. 102-3, where the measurements are given as 22.5 × 7.5 cm and 22.5 × 8 cm respectively. A photograph of the former is reproduced in P. du Bourguet, *l'Art Copte*, Musée du Louvre (Petits Guides des Grands Musées No. 19) n.d., p. 14

⁹⁸ For example, the carved cedar panels said to have come from the Church of al-Mo'allaka in Old Cairo, in the British Museum. All but one of these are conveniently reproduced in J. Beckwith, *Coptic Sculpture*, London 1963, figs. 141-7 (text p. 31), which I consider, however, to date from late in the Ayyūbid period.

⁹⁹ The chest is of ebony, with the front inlaid with ivory intarsia and measures 1.49 × 48 × 34 cm, cf.

Louvre Evangelists also compare with the figures of prophets on either sides of Christ in a panel of the outer face of the narthex doors of the Church of St. Catherine's monastery, Mount Sinai (fig. 13), which evidently depicts the Transfiguration, in imitation of the apse mosaic. A date early in the Ayyūbid period also seems feasible for the Sinai doors, which may themselves be attributed to Coptic or Syrian workmanship.¹⁰⁰

Thus, consideration of the frontispieces of Copte 13, as they were originally planned, offers a specific context for the commission of the MS, that of reactionary Coptic church propaganda against Melkite criticism during the late 1170s. As Michael was responsible for both the text and the illustration of the MS, even if it only meant supervising the production, this must have taken place in Damietta. The narrative, genre style of the Gospel scenes suggests contact with the secular art of other cities of the Ayyūbid domains, especially those of Syria, implying an overlap between religious and secular work undertaken by Coptic artists. Other works in different media, notably ceramics and wood-

White, *Monasteries* III pp. 194-6, Pls. LXIII a-b, who describes it as a reliquary from the church of el-Adra and attributes it to the 12th-13th. centuries, although he pointed out the close iconographic similarity with the 10th. century haikal screen (described pp. 188-190, Pl. LXIV-V). See also K. Weitzmann, 'The ivories of the so-called Grado Chair', *D.O.P.* 26 (1972) pp. 43 ff, esp. pp. 46-7 and figs. 60, 62, and most recently concerning the screen from the period of Moses of Nisibis, J. Leroy 'Le Décor de l'Église du Couvent des Syriens au Ouadi Natroun (Egypte)', *C.A.* XXIII (1974) pp. 153 ff.

¹⁰⁰ The door leaves each comprise four composite panels, of which all but one of each leaf are of geometric ornament. Considered here is the figural panel of the left leaf, depicting the Transfiguration. It is made up of small panels with Christ in the centre, flanked by prophets, with the hand of God above and angels in the four corners, those in the lower register with stones possibly representing Mount Tabor. The three apostles may have occupied the now missing panel in the lower row. I am grateful to Dr. Y. Tsafirir for the photograph reproduced here. The figural panel of the right leaf shows scenes of the Annunciation to Zacharias, Moses receiving the tablets of the law and the Sacrifice of Abraham. The Greek inscriptions of the panels do not invalidate the suggestion of Coptic or Syrian workmanship, as members of the various Christian communities would have visited the monastery. It is significant that St. Catherine's continued to enjoy the protection of the Muslim authorities under the Ayyūbids, which included ensuring the safety of visitors, S.M. Stern, 'Two Ayyūbid Decrees from Sinai' in Ed. S.M. Stern, *Documents from Islamic Chancelleries*, Oxford 1965 pp. 9 ff. The door panels are mentioned by C.J. Lamm, 'Fatimid Woodwork, its style and chronology', *Bulletin de l'Institut d'Égypte* XVIII (1935-7) p. 82 and pl. Xa-b.

work, can on the basis of Coptic 13 be attributed to Coptic patronage in the early Ayyūbid period. The reliance on Greek as well as Syrian models, for both frontispieces and Gospel scenes supports the view that no continuous tradition of narrative New Testament illustrations existed earlier in Coptic art; or the reactionary Coptic Metropolitan would surely have drawn on it.

In undertaking this work I gratefully acknowledge the assistance offered me by Mlle M-R Séguy and the staff of the Oriental MSS Room of the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, and the receipt of a research grant from the Faculty of Arts, Birmingham University.

List of Abbreviations used in the Notes

Books

Abū Sālih, *Churches and Monasteries*: trans. B.T.A. Evetts, *The Churches and Monasteries of Egypt and some Neighbouring Countries attributed to Abū Sālih, the Armenian*, Oxford 1895, rpt. 1969.

Badawy, *Coptic Art and Archaeology*: A. Badawy, *Coptic Art and Archaeology*, Cambridge, Mass. 1978.

Buchthal, '«Hellenistic» Miniatures': H. Buchthal, '«Hellenistic» Miniatures in Early Islamic Manuscripts', *A.I.* VII (2), 1940 pp. 125-133.

Buchthal, 'Miniatures from Baghdad': H. Buchthal, 'Early Islamic Miniatures from Baghdad', *Journal of the Walters Art Gallery* V (1942) pp. 19-39.

Buchthal, Kurz, Ettinghausen, 'Supplementary Notes': H. Buchthal, O. Kurz and R. Ettinghausen, 'Supplementary Notes to K. Holter's Check List of Islamic Illuminated Manuscripts before A.D. 1350', *A.I.* VII (2) 1940 pp. 147-164.

Buchthal, Kurz, *Hand List*: H. Buchthal and O. Kurz, *A Hand List of Illuminated Oriental Christian Manuscripts*, London 1942 (Rpt. Nendeln, Liechtenstein 1968).

Cramer, *Koptische Buchmalerei*: M. Cramer, *Koptische Buchmalerei*, Illuminationen in Manuscript-

ten des christlich-koptischen Agypten vom 4. bis 19. Jahrhundert. Recklinghausen 1964.

Dufrenne, 'Miniature': S. Dufrenne, 'Deux chefs-d'œuvre de la miniature du XI^e siècle C.A. 17 (1967) pp. 177-91.

Der Nersessian, 'Paris Gr. 74': S. Der Nersessian, 'Recherches sur les Miniatures du Parisinus Graecus 74', *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinische Gesellschaft*, XXI (1972) pp. 109-117.

Ettinghausen, *Arab Painting*: R. Ettinghausen, *Arab Painting*. Geneva 1962 (Rpt. 1977).

Grabar, 'Subject Matter': O. Grabar, 'Imperial and Urban Art in Islam: The Subject Matter of Fatimid Art'. Reprinted in *Studies in Medieval Islamic Art*, London 1976, VII, pp. 1-56.

Graf, *Reformversuch*: G. Graf, *Ein Reformversuch innerhalb der koptischen Kirche im zwölften Jahrhundert*, Paderborn 1923.

Grube, 'Dioskorides Arabicus': E.J. Grube, 'Materialien zum Dioskorides Arabicus', ed. R. Ettinghausen, *Aus der Welt der islamischen Kunst*, Festschrift für Ernst Kühnel, Berlin 1959 pp. 163-194.

Holter, 'Miniaturhandschriften vor 1350': K. Holter, 'Die islamischen Miniaturhandschriften vor 1350', *Zentralblatt für Bibliothekswesen* LIV (1937) pp. 1-34.

Horner, *Northern Dialect*: G. Horner, *The Coptic Version of the New Testament in the Northern Dialect* 4 vols., Oxford 1898-1905.

Khater, Burmester, *Hist. Patr.*: A. Khater and O.H.E. Khs-Burmester, *History of the Patriarchs of the Egyptian Church* Vol. III Part II, Cairo 1970.

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Leroy, *MSS Coptes-Arabes*: J. Leroy, *Les Manuscrits Coptes et Coptes-Arabes Illustrés*, Paris 1974.

Leroy, 'Un feuillet du ms. Copte 13': J. Leroy, 'Un feuillet du manuscrit copte 13 de la Bibliothèque Nationale égaré à Washington', *Mélanges d'Histoire des Religions offerts à Henri Charles Puech*, Paris 1974, pp. 437-446.

Millet, *Recherches*: G. Millet, *Recherches sur l'Iconographie de l'évangile aux XI^e, XV^e et XVI^e siècles*, Paris 1916 (Rpt. Paris 1960).

Monneret, *Cappella Palatina*: U. Monneret de Villard, *Le Pitture Musulmane al Soffitto della Cap*

pella Palatina in Palermo, Rome 1950

Papadopoulos, *Esthétique de l'Art Musulman*: A. Papadopoulos, *Esthétique de l'Art Musulman* 6 vols. University of Paris doctoral thesis 1971, Microfilm Ed., Lille 1972

Philon, *Early Islamic Ceramics*: H. Philon, *Catalogue of Islamic Art in the Benaki Museum, Early Islamic Ceramics*, London 1980.

Renaudot, *Hist. Patr.*: E. Renaudot, *Historia Patriarcharum Alexandrinorum Jacobitarum*, Paris 1713

Shenouda, *Copte 13*: S. Shenouda, *The Miniatures of the Paris Manuscript «Copte 13»*, Princeton University PhD thesis 1956, University Microfilms, Ann Arbor 1977.

Velmans, *Tetraévangile*: T. Velmans, *Le Tétraévangile de la Laurentienne* (Florence, *Laur. Plut. VI 23*) Paris 1971.

White, *Monasteries*: H.G. Evelyn White, *The Monasteries of the Wādī'n Natrūn*, Vols. II-III, New York 1932-1933.

Periodicals

A. Bull.: *Art Bulletin*

A.I.: *Ars Islamica*

A.I.E.O.: *Annales de l'Institut d'Etudes Orientales*

B.I.F.A.O.: *Bulletin de l'Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale*

C.A.: *Cahiers Archéologiques*

D.O.P.: *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*

THE LAST CENTURY OF BYZANTINE SYRIA: A REINTERPRETATION.¹

HUGH KENNEDY/ST. ANDREWS

The Arab conquest of Syria, Palestine and Arabia marks one of the great turning points in the history of the Mediterranean world in the early middle ages. For the Byzantine Empire the loss of these provinces with their large cities and fertile lands deprived the state of some of its most wealthy territories and marked an important stage in the contraction of the empire to the Anatolian and Aegean areas which

¹ The areas to be considered here are the sixth century provinces of Syria I and II, Phoenicia I and II and Arabia. The small province of Theodorias, created by Justinian around the city of Laodicea (Latakia) is treated as part of Syria I. Areas outwith these borders, the province of Euphratensis, are not considered even if they fall within the frontiers of the modern Syrian Republic, though some comparative material from Caesarea in Palestine is mentioned. The best examination of provinces at this period is to be found in R. Devréesse, *Le Patriarcat d'Antioche* (Paris 1945). Cities are given their classical names, where these are known, except when there are standard English versions (Antioch, Aleppo, Beirut). Arabic names follow in brackets; for the sake of consistency, transliteration is based on the system used in the *Cambridge History of Islam* and spellings may vary slightly from those found in other works.

The Latin and Greek inscriptions of Syria and Arabia, on which much of this study is based, have been published in several different collections. The most important of these is *Inscriptions Grecques et Latines de la Syrie* edited by L. Jalabert, R. Mouterde, C. Mondesert and J.-P. Rey-Coquais (Paris 1929 ff.). This has now reached seven volumes and effectively supersedes previous collections for these areas, covering most of northern Syria. This work is referred to in the notes as *IGLS* and the inscription are numbered consecutively throughout the seven volumes. For areas south of Damascus the position is more complex. The main collections are those in R.E. Brünnow and A. von Domaszewski in *Die Provincia Arabia* (Strassburg 1909) and in H.C. Bulter, *et al.*, *Syria Publications of the Princeton University Archaeological Expeditions to Syria in 1904-5 and 1909* (Leiden 1907-1949) which is referred to in the notes as *P.U.A.E.S.* For some areas it is still necessary to use W.H. Waddington, *Inscriptions Grecques et Latines de Syrie* (Paris 1870). For a full discussion of the epigraphic sources see W. van Rengen, *L'épigraphie grecque et Latine de Syrie in Aufstieg und Niedergang II*, 8, pp. 31-53 which gives a complete list of publications

were to be its centre for the next eight hundred years. But the consequences of this reverse seem to have spread far beyond the Byzantine world; as far as Pirenne was concerned this conquest marked the final collapse of the urban, Mediterranean world of late antiquity and opened the way for the rise of the rural, agricultural powers of north-west Europe. The Arab conquest was also the end of something much more ancient than the Roman Empire; since the time of Alexander, power and influence in the lands of the eastern Mediterranean had been in the hands of Greek speaking city dwellers with loyalties and contacts all over the eastern Mediterranean world. Suddenly within a generation of the Prophet's death in 632, all this had vanished and nine centuries of history and culture seem to have virtually disappeared in the course of a few years. For the first time since the Achaemenids, Syria and Palestine were ruled by an Asian empire whose heart-lands lay far to the east and whose administration was conducted in a Semitic vernacular by men with families and contacts in Mesopotamia, Iran and even further east. The events of the mid-seventh century were more than a simple change of rulers, they represented the replacement of one culture and civilization by another. So fundamental a change can hardly be accounted for by the loss of a single battle.

Explanations of these events have traditionally been of two sorts. The first considers the political and military weakness of the Byzantine empire; imperial military power had been fatally impaired by the long and savage conflict with Persia and its exhaustion allowed the Arabs an opportunity of which they took full advantage. In addition it is suggested that the persecution of the Monophysite church by the central government and its agents, had left many local people resentful and disillusioned and more than satisfied to see Roman power humbled and their own beliefs respected. The other form of explanation emphasises the Arab side. The new unity acquired by the Arab tribes with the adoption of Islam meant that they submerged their tribal feuds into the enthusiasm of their commitment to the new religion and that this emergent force proved irresistible. Both these explanations are undoubtedly correct within their limits but they will hardly account for the more far reaching changes in society and culture which accompanied the conquest. The purpose of this paper is to examine Syria and Arabia in the century before the arrival of the Muslim armies and to see if this provides any clues as to the reasons for the defeat of Roman

armies and of Hellenistic civilisation.

The written sources produced within the Byzantine world are not full enough to provide more than a few hints. For the early years of Justinian's rule we have the works of Procopius, both the *Histories* and the *Buildings* but both of these deal only with the earlier part of his rule.² The only local chronicler of importance writing in Greek was the Antiochene John Malalas whose fairly pedestrian narrative provides some useful details.³ Here again, Malalas does not continue beyond the end of Justinian's reign. Thereafter we are largely dependent on the ninth century *Chronographia* of Theophanes⁴ which is both comparatively late and brief and annalistic in form. Apart from the Greek historiography, whose failure at this point may in itself be important evidence for cultural decline, there is the Syriac tradition represented by the monophysite historians, notably John of Ephesus.⁵ John's chronicle continues until the reign of Maurice and his wide contacts in the east mean that his work is full of details not found elsewhere. His account was expanded and continued by the twelfth century writer Michael the Syrian.⁶ Although he wrote long after the events we are concerned with, Michael drew on a number of ancient primary sources in Syriac which are now lost to us and he is an important and largely reliable. Unfortunately, even his information is thin after the 590s and his account of the years immediately before the Arab conquest is disappointing; theological debate is much more prominent than political or military activities. Also among the local Christian sources we must

² References are to the Loeb edition of the *Buildings* ed. H.B. Dewing (1940).

³ Malalas, *Chronographia*, ed. Migne (*Patrologia Graeca*, vol. 97). See in addition Evagrius, *Historia Ecclesiastica* ed. Migne (*Patrologia Graeca* vol. 86, which ends in 593; and Theophylact Simocatta, *Historia*, ed. I. Bekker (Bonn, 1834) which describes the campaigns and court policies of the reign of Maurice. Neither of these provide much useful information on the social and economic state of the east at this time.

⁴ Theophanes, *Chronographia*, ed. C. de Boor (Leipzig 1883/1885/Hildesheim 1963) vol. I. On Theophanes' treatment of the seventh century, see the detailed discussion by A.S. Proudfoot, *B 44* (1974) 367-439.

⁵ Iohannis Ephesini, *Historiae Ecclesiasticae*, pars tertia ed. with Latin trans. E.W. Brooks in *Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium, Scriptores Syrii* vol. 54 (1952). For a complete account of the Syriac Sources, see S.P. Brock, 'Syriac Sources for seventh-century History', *BMGS* 3 (1977) 17-36.

⁶ Michael the Syrian, *Chronique*, ed. with French trans. J. Chabot (Paris 1899-1910) vol. 2.

mention the tenth century writer, Agapius of Manbij,⁷ who although he wrote in Arabic, drew on the Syriac Christian rather than the Arab Muslim cultural tradition. Here again, the information dealing with the fifty years before the Arab conquest is very meagre.

If the Christian historians are disappointing we can turn to their Muslim counterparts. The Arab sources for the conquests are largely concerned with the political affairs of the conquerors. The great chronicle of al-Tabarī (d. 932),⁸ for example, is disappointingly brief on the mechanism of conquest and occupation. Nor are the Arab writers greatly concerned with events in Syria and Palestine before the invasions; for them the conquests were the beginning. Nonetheless, there are ways in which the Arab sources can throw light on the state of the country before they arrived. By far the most detailed account of the conquest is to be found in Balādhurī's work⁹ the *Futūh al-Buldān* (Conquests of the Countries). Balādhurī (d. 892) is concerned to establish the exact circumstances in which each area was conquered, not only as a matter of historical interest but because it affected the fiscal state of the different regions under Arab rule; if a city or province had surrendered peacefully it was not, at least in theory, taxed as heavily as if it had been taken by force. For these purpose, the author preserved a considerable amount of anecdotal material which can shed considerable light on the nature of the conquered territories. Other Arab historians are less helpful but the geographical writings, which appear from the ninth century onwards can contain useful details. From the different written sources, we can gain some important insights into the nature of the conquest.

The Arabic and Byzantine sources make it clear that the decisive events of the war were the field battles, principally the battle of Ajnādayn in 634 and the final defeat of the Greek armies on the banks of the Yarmūk river in August 636.¹⁰ The numbers given for the Byzantine

⁷ Agapius of Manbij, *Kitāb al-'Unwān* (part 2) ed. A. Vasiliev, in: *Patrologia Orientalia*, vol. 8 (1911) pp. 399-547.

⁸ Muhammad b. Jarīr al-Tabarī, *Ta'rikh*, ed. M.J. de Goeje, *et al.*, (Leiden 1879-1901).

⁹ Ahmad b. Yahyā al-Balādhurī, *Futūh al-Buldān*, ed. S. Munajjid (Cairo 1957).

¹⁰ The literary sources were examined and commented on by M.J. de Goeje, *Mémoire sur la Conquête de la Syrie* (Leiden 1900). See also D.R. Hill, *The termination of the hostilities in the early Arab conquests A.D. 634-656* (London 1971). For a general account of the Arab conquests from the Byzantine view point see A.N. Stratos, *Byzantium in the Seventh Century*, i (Amsterdam 1972); and

forces in these encounters are very extravagant, 100,000 for the earlier battle and 200,000 at the Yarmūk, including Greeks, Syrians, men from Mesopotamia (Jazīra) and Armenians. Theophanes says that the Byzantine army at the Yarmūk consisted of two contingents, each of 40,000 men, one led by the local commander Baanes (Bahan in the Arabic sources) and the other led by Heraclius' new appointee, Theodore.¹¹ It is also interesting to note the presence of large numbers of Ghassānids under the leadership of Jabala b.al-Ayham, showing that, despite recent disagreements, these Arab allies still made a significant contribution to Byzantine power. The conduct of the Arab campaigns makes it clear that they were genuinely apprehensive about the arrival of this large force, abandoning many of their new conquests, including Damascus, and falling back to a good defensive position in familiar country. It is clear that the Byzantine army was still impressive and even the numbers given by Theophanes are larger than those for any force operating in this area in the sixth century. The battle was very hard fought but divisions between the commanders and unfavourable terrain finally led to the collapse of the imperial forces.

When we come to examine the capture of the cities, however, the picture is very different. The Arabs do not seem to have had great experience in siege warfare or any siege engines at all; when Khālid b.al-Walid needed ladders to climb the city wall at Damascus, he was obliged to borrow a couple from a neighbouring monastery.¹² It might be expected therefore, that the cities would be in a position to defend themselves against the attackers almost indefinitely, until relief arrived or hunger finally forced them to submit.

The most serious opposition seems to have come from Damascus

R.-J. Lilie, *Die byzantinische Reaction auf die Ausbreitung der Araber* (Miscellanea Byzantina Monacensia 22, Munich 1976). See also P. Mayerson, 'The First Muslim Attacks on S. Palestine', *Trans. Amer. Phil. Soc.* 95 (1964) 164 ff. Events in Egypt have been examined in detail in A.J. Butler, *The Arab Conquest of Egypt* (ed. with updated notes and bibliography by P.M. Fraser, Oxford 1978) and reassessed by F. Winkelmann, 'Ägypten und Byzanz vor der arabischen Eroberung', *BS 40* (1979) 161-82. This article went to press before the publication of F.M. Donner, *The Early Islamic Conquests*, 1981.

¹¹ Theophanes, *Chronographia*, pp. 337-8. For the main Arabic accounts, see Tabarī, *Ta'rikh*, part I, vols. 4-5 and Balādhurī, *Futūh*, pp. 160-64.

¹² Balādhurī, *Futūh*, pp. 144-45. See also the comments of Procopius on the effectiveness of even a small fortification against the Saracens, *Buildings*, pp. 156-57.

and Caesarea. Damascus attracted the attention of all the Arab commanders in Syria but still managed to hold out six months. The whole line of the ancient walls was defended, suggesting a sizeable population but we know almost nothing about the defending forces. The governor of the city was one Sergius son of Mansûr, an Arab by origin, who seems to have been a financial administrator rather than a military man. Theophanes alleges that he wished to surrender the city from the beginning although at the end it was the bishop who made terms with the invaders. If Theophanes is to be believed, Sergius had regained his position when the Arabs temporarily withdrew before the battle of Yarmûk. It is interesting that Damascus looms much larger in both Greek and Arabic accounts than the old provincial capital of Bostra, whose surrender by its Patrician, after a brief fight, is dealt with in a few lines. Clearly Damascus had become the most important urban centre in the area before the Arab conquest.

The other city whose resistance is described is Caesarea. This was the most important Byzantine centre in Palestine and its governor Sergius, had led the attempt to repel the first Arab raids on Palestine. Arab sources vary as to the length of the siege but it was probably about seven years from 635 to 640. We are given vast numbers for the Byzantine garrison here, Baladhuri speaks of 700,000 soldiers, 30,000 Samaritans and 200,000 Jews.¹³ Although these figures are absurd, it is interesting to note that the soldiers are said to have been paid regular salaries (*murtazaq*) the only mention we have of such military organization. It was not just the strength of the garrison which permitted Caesarea to survive so long, it was also the fact that it could be supplied by sea and the intermittent nature of the attacks. The siege was more like a blockade; no attempt was made to take the city by storm and commanders were frequently recalled to participate in other campaigns like the siege of Damascus and the battle of the Yarmûk. In addition, it never engaged the attention of the combined Arab armies, as Damascus had done, but only of those assigned to Palestine and the coastal areas.

Damascus and Caesarea were exceptional in their resistance. More commonly the citizens would put up a token resistance to secure

¹³ Balādhurī, *Futūh*, p. 167

reasonable terms from the attackers and to guarantee the properties of the inhabitants. In other cases there is no mention of any opposition at all. This is very puzzling. There can be no doubt that the Byzantines lost Syria because the townspeople failed to resist the invaders. There are a number of possible explanations for this. The unpopularity of Byzantine rule is mentioned by both Arab and Syriaec sources, the main causes of discontent being religious persecution of the local Monophysite and Jewish communities and the imposition of heavy taxes. In some of the smaller inland towns the arrival of the Arabs had an almost carnival atmosphere and the inhabitants welcomed their new rulers with music, dancing and garlands. Much more difficult to explain is the failure of the coastal cities to resist. It is easy to see that little towns like Larissa (Shayzar), or Epiphania (Hamà) or even the much larger centre of Emesa (Homs) were largely inhabited by non-Greeks who would have no reason to regret the passing of Byzantine rule. But what of the centres of Hellenistic and Byzantine civilization? Inland towns like Apamea or Gerasa (Jarash) or military centres like Chalcis (Qinnasrin) or Aleppo? And above all the coastal cities, Tyre, Sidon, Beirut and Antioch? Yet all these cities even Antioch, fell with a minimum of resistance. Was this political disaffection, or does it rather reflect the demographic and economic weaknesses of the cities which prevented any serious resistance?

The sources from which we must work were not directly concerned with economic history and the information we can pick up from their casual comments is random and difficult to interpret. Nonetheless a few points can perhaps be determined. Perhaps the most striking feature of these accounts is the almost complete absence of any mention of merchants or trade and of manufactured goods. The treaty made with the inhabitants of Heliopolis (*Baalbek*) allowed the merchants of the town to travel in all the areas controlled by the Muslims but it is the only treaty to contain any such provision. We are also told that Caesarea had 300 functioning markets but again this is a unique comment. According to Byzantine¹⁴ eyewitnesses of the mid-sixth century, Caesarea was greatly decayed at that time and the port almost empty so its prosperity at the time of the Arab conquest may only have been comparative. Baladhuri comments on the absence of any ship-building

¹⁴ See L. I. Levine, *Caesarea under Roman Rule* (Leiden 1975), pp. 135-39

industry in the coastal ports of Syria in the years immediately after the conquest and explains that it was confined to Egypt; Mu'āwiya established the industry at Acre in 669. A number of the coastal cities also had to be repopulated and their fortifications rebuilt; these included Tyre, Acre, Sidon, Byblos (Jubayl) and Beirut and settlers had to be moved there from inland cities like Heliopolis (Baalbek) and Emesa (Homs). Even in Homs itself, which was clearly a centre of some importance, these were ample deserted houses and gardens within the city to be distributed to the Muslim conquerors. Some of this desertion may have resulted from the flight of Greeks at the time of the conquest but most of it was probably the result of depopulation over a longer period of time.¹⁵

When the Arabs captured a city, they imposed on it the payment of taxes, and occasionally tribute in kind. It was a peculiarity of early Islamic taxation that it bore most heavily on agricultural land so we would not expect to find much reference to markets and trade in these provisions. Nonetheless it is striking that there are no such references at all while almost all towns are said to have been obliged to pay tax on their land. Where payments in kind were extracted, as at Bostra, they were of food and agricultural products and there are no mention of textiles, arms or any other manufactured goods. When Chalcis (Qinnasrin) was raided by the Muslims, the booty they took consisted of cows and sheep while Laodicea (Latakia), once one of the great ports of the Eastern Mediterranean, fell to the attackers when the inhabitants were incautious enough to open the gates to allow their cattle to go out to graze in the morning.¹⁶ The Greeks of Heliopolis (Baalbek) were forbidden to live in the city itself any more but were allowed to pasture their cattle in the surrounding country. The picture that emerges is not of thriving commercial and industrial cities, whose economies were enlivened by a flourishing Mediterranean and caravan trade, but rather of small, country towns, most of whose inhabitants lived by agriculture. Taxes were to be paid in kind or gold and silver, confirming the archaeological evidence that coinage did continue to circulate during this period, even if at a reduced level.

¹⁵ For the conquest and repopulation of the coastal areas see Balādhurī, *Futūh*, pp. 139-40, 152.⁵⁷

¹⁶ Balādhurī, *Futūh*, pp. 132, 157, 172.

The written sources, then, suggest a land where cities were no longer important centres of wealth and power. Nor do typically urban economic activities, manufacturing and trading, seem to have been very significant and there is no mention of thriving ports on the sea-board. Although the evidence is very patchy, this picture seems very different from the urban, commercial Syria of the Roman and early Byzantine period, and that the Arabs invaded a demographically depressed and economically fairly primitive land, a country in fact more similar to Merovingian Gaul than to second or fifth century Syria.

In order to examine this picture in more detail, we have to turn to the archaeological evidence. The importance of archaeology as a source for the Byzantine period has only recently been stressed, notably by Professor Clive Foss,¹⁷ who has convincingly argued from the archaeological data that the cities of Asia Minor, especially Sardis and Ephesus, suffered a dramatic decline during the first decades of the seventh century, probably as a result of the Persian invasions. While not accepting all his conclusions, Foss's work is important in illustrating how material evidence can be used to supplement the feeble written sources and produce a coherent picture of economic and social change.

When we turn to the archaeological evidence for the last century of Roman Syria, we are faced with a number of problems. The most obvious of these is that the material is very patchy indeed. When Foss investigated the decline of the Byzantine city in Asia Minor, he could turn to a number of key sites, notably Ephesus and Sardis, where the process of excavation had revealed the plans and development of complete towns of the late antique period; the area enclosed by the walls could be calculated and the fate of public buildings determined with some accuracy. In Syria, few sites have provided similar opportunities. Two of the best known classical sites, Petra and Palmyra (Tadmur) were in decline long before the period under discussion while other important Byzantine centres, Antioch, Tyre, Beirut and Damascus, for example, have never ceased to be inhabited with the result that it is very difficult to chart their progress. Alone of the classical sites of the

¹⁷ See C. Foss, 'The Persians in Asia Minor and the end of Antiquity', *EHR* 90 (1975) 721-747; *Byzantine and Turkish Sardis* (Cambridge, Mass. 1976) and *Ephesus after Antiquity* (Cambridge 1979).

area, Gerasa (Jarash) has provided an overall picture comparable with the great Anatolian sites and even here much of the evidence remains partial and ambiguous. Other sites have been to a more limited extent explored, Antioch and Apamea, for example, and some of the results are informative and suggestive. In contrast to excavation and large scale clearance, the eastern Mediterranean area has seen a good deal of surveying, both from the air and on the ground. Most of this has concentrated on rural areas of small towns, villages and scattered forts rather than on major urban sites but the results are still important for our purposes.

If the archaeological evidence is scattered and very incomplete, it is also difficult to interpret. The first problem is that archaeologists have tended to look to catastrophes, notably invasion to civil war, to explain changes in the urban pattern in late antiquity. Much of the dating is imprecise. It is often difficult to say whether a building ceases to be used in 560, 600 or 640 on archaeological grounds alone. It is thus very tempting in the case of a site that is abandoned in the late sixth or early seventh century to look through the chronicles for a suitable disaster to account for this; it is therefore natural to link them to the Persian or Arab conquests and thereby help to account for and even to date the archaeological evidence. The same applies to dating by earthquakes; as Foss has pointed out, earthquake damage is rarely wholly an adequate explanation for the abandonment of a site. The significant fact is not that the building or city was destroyed but that it was not subsequently rebuilt. As the history of Antioch shows repeatedly, a vital urban society could recover from the most appalling natural catastrophes. Invasion and earthquake may have accelerated the decline of Hellenistic urban civilization but we should be wary of accepting it as the sole explanation.

There is also a temptation among both archaeologists and historians to regard the Byzantine period as a sort of plateau, that the patterns established in the fourth century continued, more or less uninterrupted until the seventh century and to assume that because a city can be shown to have been prosperous in the year 500, that that prosperity is likely to have continued until 600. As I hope to show, there is good reason to believe that the decade 540 to 550 represents a sort of turning point in the history of Byzantine Syria, that up to this point there is a picture of comparative prosperity and demographic stability, but after

these dates the picture is one of considerable and accelerating decline. Much archaeological work, especially surveys of settlement sites simply contrasts Byzantine occupation with early Islamic and cannot be precise enough to detail shifts within the Byzantine period.

In addition, much of the evidence for these changes is negative; that is we can say of a site that there are no traces of occupation after a given date, that no more churches were built in a certain city but this can never be positive proof; we may simply not have discovered the buildings or missed the traces of later occupation. Each individual piece of negative evidence is not itself decisive but the cumulative effect can be very convincing. If it can be shown to be part of a widespread and consistent pattern, then we must suppose that it is more than mere coincidence.

Antioch was the most magnificent city of Syria in late antiquity and it flourished in the fourth and fifth centuries, a centre of population and culture. It was the centre of government of the province of Syria, and its patriarch was one of the greatest dignitaries of the Christian church. It was in a real sense the capital of northern Syria and its fate must have affected and reflected the condition of the rest of the area.¹⁸ Yet despite its erstwhile glory, it was taken by the Arabs in 636 with the minimum of resistance and the Arabic historians treat its fall as a fairly minor incident.

The Antioch of the early seventh century was a far cry from the city of Libanius and Chrysostom and both literary and archaeological sources suggest that it had been in decline for a century before the coming of Islam. In the sixth century, the city was visited by a whole series of calamities, both natural and man-made; there were earthquakes in 526, 528 and later which did very considerable damage. In 540, Antioch was taken and occupied briefly by the Persians and in 542 it was visited by the first outbreak of the bubonic plague which was to recur throughout the century.¹⁹ That urban life continued at all in the face of

¹⁸ For Antioch in late Antiquity see G. Downey, *A History of Antioch in Syria* (Princeton 1961). Downey's work provides a full survey of both literary and archaeological evidence. For a more recent survey of the city in the fourth century, see W. Leibschuetz, *Antioch in the Age of Libanius* (Oxford 1972).

¹⁹ Downey, *Antioch*, pp. 519-25, 533-46, 553-57 describes these catastrophes, laying considerable evidence on the loss of population which resulted. The historian Malalas seems to have been among

such adversity was probably due to the determination of the emperor Justinian who made great efforts to rebuild and restore the city. His works are described by Procopius. This account records the devastation and reconstruction of the streets and public buildings, claiming that the town was even more magnificent than it had been before but at the same time he mentions that the circuit of the city walls was reduced, clearly suggesting that the population had declined. The reduction in area is confirmed by Michael the Syrian who describes the new walls as being built in the middle of the town.²⁰ Theraeafter, the records of Antioch are largely confined to military activities, the affairs of the Patriarchs and the miracles of local saints, and after the departure of the chronicler Malalas in 540, we have no local historian to give us detailed information. The Persian conquest and occupation of the early seventh century is too poorly documented to give us much idea of its impact.

The site of Antioch was the subject of excavations carried out by the Princeton University expedition from 1933 to 1939 and, despite local political difficulties, the excavators made a number of discoveries which are directly relevant to the present discussion.²¹ Within the city walls, attention was focused on reconstructing the ancient street plans and determining the position of the principle monuments. The problems faced by the excavators were very considerable. Not only was much of the area built over, which meant that soundings had to be very limited, but the level of debris was very deep. This was mostly a result of the accumulated layers of destroyed buildings, but also of the silt continuously washed down from Mount Silpius which overlooks the city. This meant that, unlike Apamea for example, there was a very clearly differentiated stratigraphy. When Justinian rebuilt the main

those who left the city at this time (Downey, *Antioch*, p. 39). Earthquakes and invasions are conveniently summarized on p. 738, which does not, however, mention the recurrent plagues.

²⁰ For Procopius' account see G. Downey, 'Procopius on Antioch. A Study of Method in the *De Aedificiis*', *B* 14 (1939) 361-78. Also Michael the Syrian, *Chronique*, vol. 2, p. 194.

²¹ *Antioch-on-the-Orontes*, Vol. 1.: *The Excavations of 1932*, ed. G.W. Elderkin (Princeton 1934); Vol. 2: *The Excavations, 1933-36*, ed., R. Stillwell (Princeton 1938); Vol. 3: *The Excavations, 1937-1939*, ed., R. Stillwell (Princeton 1941); Vol. 4, pt. 1: *Ceramics and Islamic Coins*, ed., F.O. Waag (Princeton 1948); Vol. 4, pt. 2: *Greek, Roman, Byzantine and Crusaders' Coins*, ed., D.B. Waag (Princeton 1952); Vol. 5: *Les Portiques d'Antioche*, ed. J. Lassus (Princeton 1972).

street, he did so at a level which was more than a metre higher than the level of the street destroyed in the 526 earthquake.²² This street was the subject of excavations conducted by Jean Lassus, who was attached to the American expedition. He managed to reconstruct the various stages the thoroughfare had gone through since Seleucid times. The interpretation of the Justinianic street has proved somewhat controversial: Downey, writing before the full publication of Lassus' results, emphasises that the street was smaller and less ambitious than its predecessors, indicating the general poverty of the city, while Lassus himself has challenged this view, arguing that although the street was narrower, the shops with their mosaic floors were as magnificent as ever.²³ He also records that this street was invaded subsequently by small buildings of very poor workmanship which blocked the road and diverted traffic.²⁴ There is no archeological evidence which allows us to date this process exactly and the excavator tentatively ascribes it to the period following the Arab conquest. However it is clear that the new structures were built directly on to the Justinianic pavement. Now as we have seen, debris accumulates very rapidly in Antioch so this probably means that the disruption of the street followed fairly closely on its construction; it was not the response to the destruction of the Justinianic layout and building anew but rather gradual encroachment on the existing surface. It is therefore entirely probable that this process occurred in the century between Justinian's work and the arrival of the Arabs. Other evidence from the area within Justinian's walls is more fragmentary. It seems clear that the island area which had been an important part of the city in Hellenistic and Roman times was no longer included in the walls.²⁵ Even within the now reduced circuit, the late sixth century must have seen many areas derelict. The excavators describe two buildings, one an important bath, which seem to have been destroyed by the earthquake of 526, rebuilt (in the case of the baths on a more modest scale) and then destroyed by fire, probably by the Per-

²² See J. Lassus, *Antioch-on-the-Orontes*, Vol. 5, p. 148.

²³ For the discussion, see Downey, *Antioch*, pp. 547-48 and J. Lassus, *Antioch-on-the-Orontes*, Vol. 5, pp. 148-50.

²⁴ For these structures and their dating, see J. Lassus, *Antioch-on-the-Orontes*, Vol. 5, p. 150.

²⁵ G. Downey, *Antioch*, pp. 548-9.

sians in 540.²⁶ The fate of baths is particularly interesting; the disappearance of classical temples and even theatres need not necessarily indicate reduced prosperity but may be accounted for by changing patterns of belief and culture or by the sort of prohibitive legislation which Justinian introduced against pagan displays. But the tradition of public baths is one that has never died in the cities of the Near East and if baths were being abandoned and allowed to fall into decay, it must be an important indicator of the decline of urban life. Long before the arrival of the Arabs, in fact, the city had already lost its classical aspect and amenities and had become a community of narrow winding streets and impoverished buildings amid the ruins of Justinian's attempts to restore a vanished prosperity and glory.

Outside the walls of Antioch, there were two communities which depended directly on the great city. One of these was Daphne, a few kilometres to the south. Here, on an elevated plateau overlooking the plains were found the springs which provided much of Antioch's water supply and this agreeable location became a place of resort for the citizens and the site of luxurious villas. Since much of the site is unbuilt on, considerable excavations were possible here, both of villas and the theatre. When the villas ceased to be inhabited is not clear, but there seems to have been no new building or significant restoration which can be dated to the second half the sixth century or later and it is likely that many of the houses were abandoned. The theatre went out of use at around this time, possibly in the reign of Justinian, certainly before the end of the century.²⁷

The second dependent community was the port of Seleucea in Pieria, the main maritime outlet of classical Antioch. The archaeological evidence from the late period is very scanty; excavations, which were conducted by the Antioch expedition were brought to a premature close and were not fully published thereafter. Nonetheless, both written and material remains show that this was a substantial port in early Imperial times. The excavated remains include part of the city walls and a martyrion. The martyrion is of the fifth century and went through two reconstructions of which the second 'bears witness to the

²⁶ R. Stillwell, *Antioch-on-the-Orontes*, Vol. 3, pp. 8-9, 12.

²⁷ R. Stillwell, *Antioch-on-the-Orontes*, Vol. 2, p. 59.

decline of the congregation, probably as a result of the Arab conquest' although no more precise dating can be given for this decline.²⁸ The excavation of one of the city gates shows that this was walled up a late date and transformed into an independent fortress, indicating the decline of the urban community. It seems that the site shows few signs of activity in the latter half of the sixth century and the striking absence of any inscriptions at all from this period has already been commented on by Liebeschuetz. The Arab conquest of the city is not mentioned by any of the sources, itself a testimony to its unimportance, but Baladhuri does mention that the Umayyad Caliph al-Walid b. 'Abd al-Malik settled troops on agricultural land at Seleucea in the early eighth century.²⁹ The Arabs also built a fortress on the site but there is no mention of any existing community with the clear implication that the area was deserted and all the evidence suggests that the city was effectively depopulated before the Arab conquests. The church shows no signs of burning or violent destruction, although, like every building in the area, it was the victim of periodic earthquakes, and it seems that the abandonment was gradual and peaceful. If this is true, the decline of Seleucea has important implications for Antioch and its hinterland as well, suggesting that the city was no longer involved in Mediterranean commerce on any large scale.

It is important not to exaggerate the scale of the decline of Antioch; the site was never depopulated. Arab geographers wax lyrical, not just about the natural fertility and richness of the site, but also about the number and beauty of the Christian churches, many of which must have survived from Roman times. It seems too that one of the aqueducts from Daphne was still in use at the end of the twelfth century. Nonetheless, both literary and archaeological evidence combine to show that the century before the arrival of the Arabs was one of rapid decline and as the greatest modern historian of Antioch put it, 'the real greatness of the city must have come to an end in A.D. 540'.³⁰

If the evidence for Antioch in late antiquity is comparatively full,

²⁸ R. Stillwell, *Antioch-on-the-Orontes*, Vol. 3, p. 52.

²⁹ W. Liebeschuetz, *Antioch*, p. 99, n. 6. The inscriptions of Seleucea are published in *IGLS*, nn. 1115-1203. Baladhuri, *Futūh*, p. 175.

³⁰ G. Downey, *Antioch*, p. 559.

the same cannot be said of other cities in Syria I. Of Laodicea (Latakia) we have almost no record at all except that there was an earthquake in the late sixth century in which 7,000 people are said to have perished. Sauvaget has traced the ancient town plan and used it to develop a very convincing model for the transformation of the classical colonnaded street into the mediaeval *suq* but modern building has covered the old site and it is impossible to come to any significant conclusions about the sixth century city.³¹ However, the picture drawn by Baladhuri of an essentially agricultural community with no mention of shipping or commercial activity³² coupled with the complete absence of any epigraphic evidence for the sixth century,³³ may suggest the impoverishment and ruralisation what had been one of Syria's most important sea-ports. Further south on the narrow coastal strip, there were a number of small settlements which seem to have put up more resistance to Muslim attack than the larger cities of Phoenicia. Significantly, however, most of them, Antarados (Tartus) and Gabala (Jabala) example, are referred to as *hisn* (fortress) rather than *madina* (city) and the fortress at Gabala was occupied by monks practising their religion rather than by soldiers.³⁴ There is no evidence of real urban life from this area.

The site of the military centre of Chalcis (Qinnasrin) has been untouched by modern development but it has yet to be excavated. Justinian is known to have restored the city walls and the archaeological survey shows a lower town with a raised citadel on one side, an impression confirmed by Baladhuri who recounts how the inhabitants evacuated the lower town when the Muslims attacked and established themselves in the citadel, whence they negotiated terms, paying their tribute in cattle and sheep.³⁵

In Aleppo a classical grid plan underlies the streets of the town but a part from the fragments of the Byzantine Cathedral, the fabric of the

³¹ Michael the Syrian, *Chronique*, vol. 2, p. 243; J. Sauvaget, 'Le Plan de Laodicée sur Mer', *Bulletin d'Études Orientales* 4 (1934) 111-12.

³² Balādhuri, *Futūh*, p. 157. See above p.

³³ W. Liebeschuetz, *Antioch*, p. 99, n. 6.

³⁴ Balādhuri, *Futūh*, p. 158.

³⁵ R. Mouterde and A. Poidebard, *Le Limes de Chalcis* (Paris 1945), pp. 1-9; Balādhuri, *Futūh*, pp. 172-73.

ancient city has been obliterated. Sauvaget, whose history of Aleppo is a pioneering masterpiece of urban studies, had no doubts, however, that the second half of the sixth century saw a serious diminution of urban life, less pronounced than that in western Europe but noticeable nonetheless.³⁶ However, the city continued to be important in the defence of the eastern empire; and the Emperor Maurice withdrew the garrison from the outpost of Circesium on the Middle Euphrates to Aleppo³⁷ which must have been at that date an important military and administrative centre.

If the great urban sites of northern Syria are comparatively difficult to examine, at least compared with those of western Anatolia, the countryside offers possibilities of investigating village and small town life which are unique. The most famous of these rural areas is the limestone hills of northern Syria. Lying between the great cities, Antioch to the west, Apamea to the south and Chalcis to the east, these hills supported no large urban settlement themselves, but they have preserved the remains of many villages and monastic communities, dating from the second to the seventh centuries. The landscape of the hills is not inspiring; there are no great heights and, with few exceptions, the summits are rolling hills and small plateaux. The terrain is very rocky, the vegetation sparse and communications greatly impeded by the roughness of the ground. There are small plains in the valleys of comparatively fertile land but they are fairly rare and seldom of any great extent. Apart from these, the landscape seems to discourage human habitation. And yet the slopes and summits are studded with the remains of small communities, so close that you can usually see one from another and two or three can be visited in a morning's walking. The limestone outcrops which make the terrain so difficult also provided an ideal building material which the villagers of late antiquity used with consummate skill. Here we have grand villas, often two stories high, more modest village houses, churches and monastic complexes miraculously preserved. The architecture is sober and restrained and while classical motifs may appear on individual buildings, none of these settlements, even the largest like Al-Bara, show any signs of classical town planning.

³⁶ J. Sauvaget, *Alep.* vol. 1, pp. 58, 66-67.

³⁷ A.H.M. Jones, *The later Roman Empire*, vol. 2, p. 661.

From the times of their discovery, these 'dead villages' have aroused interest, mostly from architectural historians; de Vogüé first brought them to the attention of the world in the late nineteenth century.³⁸ His work was followed up by that of the three American archaeological expeditions of 1899-1900, 1904-5 and 1909.³⁹ The coming of the French mandate allowed more detailed examination of the sites and led to Joseph Mattern's⁴⁰ general survey and Jean Lassus' more detailed work on the religious architecture.⁴¹ So far the interest of scholars had been focused for the most part on the development of building types but Georges Tchalenko in his masterly account of the *Villages Antiques de la Syrie du Nord*⁴² attempted to answer some more general questions. He was struck, as others had been before him, by the contrast between the neglected state of the country as he found it (in the 1930s) and the apparently flourishing life of late antiquity and was moved to wonder what the source of the evident prosperity had been. He suggested that these were no ordinary agricultural villages but specialised in the monoculture of olives, which could flourish on the barren heights. The oil would then be exported to surrounding areas in exchange, presumably, for the subsistence crops which the inhabitants were unable to grow in sufficient quantities themselves. This meant that the villages were not self-sufficient peasant communities but were closely integrated into the economy of the surrounding areas and that their survival depended on the existence of a reliable market for their produce. It is therefore of great importance for this study to attempt to assess the condition of this area at the end of antiquity.

The archaeological evidence is abundant, perhaps even excessive but in some ways the very abundance of surface remains has impeded

³⁸ M. de Vogüé, *Syrie Centrale, Architecture civile et religieuse, du I^{er} au VII^e siècle*, 2 vols. (Paris 1865-77).

³⁹ See *Publications of an American Archaeological Expedition to Syria in 1899-1900* (New York 1903-30) and *Syria*, Publications of the Princeton Archaeological Expedition to Syria in 1904-5 and 1909 (Leiden 1907-49).

⁴⁰ J. Mattern, *A travers les villes mortes de Haute Syrie* (Beirut 1944).

⁴¹ J. Lassus, *Sanctuaires chrétiens de Syrie* (Paris 1947). On churches, see also H.C. Butler, *Early Churches in Syria* (Princeton 1929).

⁴² G. Tchalenko, *Villages Antiques de la Syrie du Nord* (Paris 1953).

analysis. A project by Lassus and Tchalenko for a full scale investigation of one site was vitiated by the outbreak of war in 1939⁴³ with the result that all our knowledge depends on surveys, rather than on excavation. This makes it very difficult to establish when buildings went out of use; it is clear that there are no signs of burning or willfull destruction and that the settlements were simply abandoned by their inhabitants.⁴⁴ We can tell approximately when new buildings stop being constructed and when new inscriptions ceased to be put up but further than that it is hard to go. Tchalenko and other commentators have tended to adopt a cumulative view to the sites, to assume that all the buildings (with obvious exceptions like pagan temples) were inhabited and used at the same time which inevitably leads to the conclusion that the widest extent of settlement was reached during the sixth century and that if, to give a very crude example, there is a house dated to the fourth century next to one of the sixth, this proves that there were two inhabited houses there in the late sixth century; such is the preservation of the ruins, that it is almost impossible to determine whether or not the earlier house was still lived in when the later one was constructed. These limitations in the evidence must be born in mind when we come to consider the evidence for late antiquity.

In the main, Tchalenko sees the prosperity of the villages as continuing uninterrupted until the invasions of the early seventh century. That the prosperity continued despite the evident decline of the neighbouring metropolis of Antioch, he argues, was due to the fact that much of the export trade was not with Syrian cities but across the Mediterranean from ports like Seleucea and Laodicea.⁴⁵ It was not until the Arab conquest interrupted maritime trade that the wealth of the area disappeared.⁴⁶ There are several objections to this hypothesis; it is hard to think of an area in the central or western Mediterranean which would be in a position to import large quantities of olive oil in the late sixth century and such evidence as there is suggests that neither

⁴³ Tchalenko, *Villages Antiques*, vol. 1., p. xii. Since this article went to press, the picture has been modified by the publication of the excavations at D  h  s by J.P. Sodini et al. (*Syria* vol. 57, 1980).

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, vol. 1., p. 438.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, vol. 1., pp. 422-35.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, vol. 1., pp. 435-37.

Laodicea nor Seleucea were flourishing ports at this time. Nonetheless, the apparent flourishing of the area in a period when the cities of northern Syria were going through a major demographic and economic crisis requires some explanation.

A detailed study of the evidence offered by Tchalenko suggests that the continued prosperity of the region was not as complete as his general conclusions would suggest. In many areas he notes that civil building seems to tail off around the end of the first half of the sixth century⁴⁷ while ecclesiastical and particularly monastic building continues until the early seventh.⁴⁸ Some of the areas he studied in most detail make this clear. In the villages surrounding the little plain of Dānā on the main Roman road from Antioch to Aleppo and Chalcis, he notes that civil architecture flourishes in the fourth and fifth centuries but declines during the sixth while monastic building reaches its apogee at the same time. Slightly further north, in the plain of Qātūrā at the foot of the hills on which the great monastery of St. Simeon Stylites stands, the picture is very similar. Here there is one village, Rafāda, out of the several small communities which border the plain, where the houses are strikingly well built and decorated. A series of five dated inscriptions show building activity from 341 to 516 A.D. but thereafter the series ends and there is no evidence of further building on the site in the century before the Arab conquest.⁵⁰ Nor, with one exception, do any of the other, more modest villages around the plain show convincing evidence of continued prosperity in the late sixth century. The one exception is the village of Dayr Simean, attached to the great monastery and pilgrimage centre and Tchalenko shows conclusively that this was a service community, based on the pilgrimage trade rather than agriculture.⁵¹ Attached to the plain of Dānā there is a monastic site, known today as Qasr al-Banāt which is probably to be identified as the house of Mar Biza mentioned in monophysite lists of

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, vol. I., pp. 135, 142-43, 283-84, 290.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, vol. I., pp. 118-19, 149-51, 177-78, 181, 279, 317-18. For monastic economies in general during the period, see E. Patlagean, *Pauvreté économique et pauvreté sociale à Byzance* (Paris 1977) pp. 318-339.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, vol. I., pp. 142-43, 149-51.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, vol. I., p. 197.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, vol. I., pp. 219-20.

religious houses. The house is of particular interest because the boundaries of its estates were confirmed in 588 by a local administrative official and recorded in an inscription, and the boundary walls can be traced on an aerial photograph.⁵² The monastery property includes two sorts of land; fertile land on the plains for the growing of cereals and land on the limestone hills which was probably devoted to olives. Tchalenko sees this as an industrial enterprise, providing cereals for everyday use and olive oil for selling in outside markets. But it seems more probable that this is a self-sufficient estate, the plain and the hillside both providing different products for the needs of the community. There are also ruins of small structures which may have been agricultural buildings or even labourers' huts. What we can see here, perhaps is a monastery engaged in the consolidation of a fairly large estate in the later sixth century to provide for all their needs without recourse to outside markets. This is not to say that olive oil was never sold to outsiders but it is to suggest that monoculture may have given way to a more broadly based agricultural economy.

How then should we interpret the apparent decline in secular building and the contemporaneous boom in monastic construction? Perhaps the expansion of monasteries and the consolidation of their estates is a sign that the monoculture of olives which had brought such prosperity to the area in the fourth and fifth centuries was no longer viable by the late sixth. Only large self-sufficient estates could survive the collapse of the market and could indeed expand to take over lands which were no longer able to provide their inhabitants with a living. There is also some evidence for the growth of large secular estates at this time.⁵³ It is possible that the traveller in the limestone massif in the year 600 would have passed through many deserted villages, whose prosperity had vanished with the urban markets they had depended on, whose populations had been reduced by plague and invasions and whose remaining productive lands had passed into the hands of religious communities and other large land-owners. Only villages sustained by a mixed economy or a much visited sanctuary would have sur-

⁵² *Ibid.*, vol. 1, pp. 174-75; vol. 3, pl. LII. For the text of the inscription, see *IGLS*, n. 530. See also Pattegean *Pauvreté*, pp. 322-23.

⁵³ Tchalenko, *Villages Antiques*, pp. 114-17; 118, n. 4; 126-27; 412-13.

vived.⁵⁴ Clearly the depopulation was not complete, the final decline of the region does not seem to have been completed before the Arab-Byzantine wars of the tenth century; but the picture of a thriving rural economy, based on the export of olives, suddenly extinguished by the arrival of the Arabs, is not supported by the archaeological or the historical evidence.

Syria II is a much less well documented province than its namesake to the north.⁵⁵ There are few literary sources beyond the lists of bishops attending councils to give us any idea of municipal life and no local historians of note. Nor, except on the fringes of the desert which will be dealt with later, are there any archaeological records of importance, other than at the site of the capital, Apamea. Apamea is one of the most beautiful classical sites in the region, not so much for the existing ruins but for the site, on the very edge of the limestone plateau, overlooking the wide, green valley of the Orontes, fertile in classical times and now once more being brought under the plough, and the Alawite mountains which bar the view to the west. The modern settlement is confined to the original citadel hill, and the river valley which leaves the planned, classical city free for the archaeologist. Excavations have been conducted off and on since before the Second World War but an overall picture of the fate of the city in late antiquity has yet to emerge.⁵⁶ Like other cities in the area, the Hellenistic and Imperial cities were marked by wide, colonnaded streets which served as the main arteries of the town. Sometime during the sixth century, this regular layout seems to have deteriorated and the colonnaded streets to have been invaded by shops and other small structures and, in the case of Apamea, by a church.⁵⁷ The dating of these develop-

⁵⁴ Qalat Sim'an is of course the most famous of the local pilgrimage centres of the sixth century, but there were others. See Tchalenko, *Villages Antiques*, vol. 1, pp. 279, 344.

⁵⁵ For a list of the cities and bishops of Syria II, see Devr  sse, *Patriarcat*, pp. 179-83.

⁵⁶ For the publication of these excavations, see J. and J.-C. Balty, *Actes du Colloque Apam  e de Syrie. Bilan des recherches arch  ologiques*, vol. 1 (Brussels 1969) and vol. 2 (Brussels 1972).

⁵⁷ This process is discussed in Balty, *Colloque*, vol. 1, pp. 17, 41-43, 77, and 114. On p. 42, the usurpation of the classical porticoes is ascribed to the anarchy of the Persian invasions (613-28) but there is no evidence to prove that this did not happen in the late sixth century, perhaps in the aftermath of the sack of 573. The parallel process in Antioch and Jarash seems attributable to that period, although the latter does not seem to have been sacked at all. The change in civic architecture probably owed

ments is not clear. Apamea was occupied peacefully by the Persians in 540 and the Persian king relaxed at the circus there. The pilgrim Antoninus Martyr travelling in about 570 says that the town was the residence of all the wealthy people of the province. In 573 however, the town suffered a major disaster when it was taken and burned by a Persian commander, its most noble church destroyed for ever, and vast numbers of its inhabitants were taken into exile.⁵⁸ Perhaps it was in the aftermath of this catastrophe that the classical city was transformed into a small, provincial town, accommodating itself in the ruins of its previous greatness. The inhabitants greeted the arriving Muslim armies with tambourine players and singers but nothing in Balādhuri's account suggests that theirs was more than a minor, rural community.⁵⁹

The eastern frontiers of both the provinces of Roman Syria lay in the desert.⁶⁰ In the heyday of Palmyra these frontiers had been pushed far beyond the limits of dry-farming settlement and forts were constructed on the remote and barren hillsides of the central desert, supplied with water gathered from carefully constructed catchment systems. These forts, restored in the reign of Diocletian ran in a northeasterly line from Damascus, through Palmyra to the Euphrates at Callinicum (Raqqa). Poidebard, who first mapped these remote outposts, suggested that the *limes* remained intact until the Arab invasions but recent research has tended to cast doubts on this. The sixth century seems to have seen a fundamental change in the pattern of de-

more to long term economic and demographic changes than to short term upheaval. It should be noted that the expanding settlements of the fifth century, in the limestone massif and along the fringes of the desert show no signs of regular street plans or colonnaded streets. We should perhaps note Lassus' warning (*Colloque*, p. 50) against imagining that these porticoes were more orderly than was in fact the case and remember Libanius' comments on the stalls and merchandise crowded in between the pillars (Liebschuetz, *Antioch*, pp. 55-56).

⁵⁸ Iohannis Ephesini, *Historiae Ecclesiasticae*, pp. 221-22; Michael the Syrian, *Chronique*, vol. 2, p. 312. There is also a confused account in Agapius of Manbij, *Unwān*, p. 435, where the name of the Persian commander is taken to be that of another fortress. For the destruction of the Cathedral of the East, probably the home of the relic of the True Cross, see Balty, *Colloque*, vol. 2, pp. 213-14.

⁵⁹ Balty, *Colloque*, vol. 1, p. 44; Balādhuri, *Futūh*, p. 156.

⁶⁰ The frontier districts to be considered here are those of both Syria I and Syria II, approximately the area to the east of the modern road from Hama to Aleppo.

fence and, perhaps, the pattern of settlement in the area. The decline of Palmyra and its commercial links seems to have led to the simultaneous decline of the desert forts and many of the settlements that surrounded the great city; D. Schlumberger saw no evidence of settlement in the area after the fourth century.⁶¹ It seems that after this, the frontiers of permanent settlement retreated to the limits of rainfall agriculture. Much of this area on the fringes of the desert has now been surveyed though no excavations have been undertaken at any of the late antique sites.⁶² As so often, the evidence for the changes of the period is largely negative; there is no evidence of continued habitation at sites far out in the desert and there are several instances where abandoned forts were inhabited by monks or solitary ascetics;⁶³ that topos of saints lives, the deserted fort taken over by the man of God was no mere literary device, it reflected the reality of conditions on the Syrian frontier. This picture of decline is reversed as we move west, towards Chalcis, Aleppo and Epiphania (Hamā). Here there is evidence of continuing, even expanding communities. There are major buildings like the palace complex at Qasr Ibn Wardān (564 A.D.)⁶⁴ and the barracks at Androna (Al-Andarīn, 558-9 A.D.)⁶⁵ but there are also numerous remains of fortified settlements of a more modest nature,

⁶¹ D. Schlumberger, *La Palmyrène du Nord-Ouest* (Paris 1951) pp. 132-33.

⁶² The most important archaeological surveys are *The Publications of an American Archaeological Expedition to Syria in 1899-1900*, vol. 2 by H.C. Butler (New York 1903) hereafter referred to as *A.A.E.S.*; *P.U.A.E.S.*, Section B, Parts 1 and 2 by H.C. Butler and W.K. Prentice (Leiden 1909); J. Lassus, *Inventaire Archéologique de la région au nord-est de Hama* (Paris 1935) and R. Mousterde and A. Poidebard, *Le Limes de Chalcis* (1945). Much of the archaeological detail is conveniently summarised by R. Devréesse, *Patriarcat*, pp. 162-67 and 184-91 which also includes useful maps but was published too soon to take account of the work of Mousterde and Poidebard. For the epigraphic evidence, see, in addition to the works cited above, *IGLS*, vols. 2 and 4. The defense of this area has recently been discussed in an important paper by W. Liebeschuetz, *The Defences of Syria in the Sixth Century* (*Limeskongress X*, Köln-Bonn 1977), pp. 487-99.

For the earlier history of the frontier see E.W. Gray, 'The Eastern Roman Limes from Constantine to Justinian', in: *Proceedings of the African Classical Association* (1973) pp. 24-40.

⁶³ See for example, *Limes de Chalcis*, pp. 74 (Burj Za'rūr), 91 (Isriya), 108 ('Amsharaddī), 146 (Turkmāniya).

⁶⁴ See *P.U.A.E.S.*, Section B, pp. 29-40; *Limes de Chalcis*, pp. 174-75; *IGLS*, vol. 4, nn. 1841-44.

⁶⁵ *P.U.A.E.S.*, Section B, pp. 46-63; *IGLS*, vol. 4, nn. 1676-1713.

like Zabad⁶⁶ or Anasarthā,⁶⁷ distinguished by the comparatively large areas enclosed within their ramparts. These settlements were not cities planned in the classical manner but seem to have been, like Al-Bāra and other late antique settlements on the limestone hills to the west, more like large villages. Settlements like Androna (Al-Andarīn) and Taroutia (Karrātīn) were sizeable communities but there is little sign of regular street plans or of any public buildings except churches and fortifications.⁶⁸ From the evidence of inscriptions, it would seem that these communities enjoyed a boom between the late fourth and the early sixth century and the vast majority of the dated houses and churches recorded in the area fall within these dates.⁶⁹ This ties in well with what we know of demographic trends during the period and suggests that an expanding population was colonising new, marginal lands on the fringes of the desert. The evidence also suggests that such communities were largely agricultural in character since they were confined to areas where dry farming was possible and few of them seem to have been connected with important cross roads, passes or strategically placed wells. Some of them, too, may have benefitted from a modest trade with the bedouin tribes further out in the desert for whom they would be the natural market towns. Perhaps some at least of the inhabitants of the area were themselves semi-nomads, living in settled communities in sowing and harvest times but going off in search of grazing at others.

In the middle of the sixth century the pattern of building changes. It would seem that during the fifth century there had been little em-

⁶⁶ A.A.E.S., pp. 299-305; Devr  sse, *Patriarcat*, p. 167; *Limes de Chalcis* pp. 162-67; *IGLS*, vol. 2, nn. 304-15.

⁶⁷ A.A.E.S., pp. 300-1; Devr  sse, *Patriarcat*, pp. 162-63; *Limes de Chalcis*, pp. 67-68; *IGLS*, vol. 2, nn. 281-301. Malalas records that Justinian made the *Kastron* Anasarthā into a *polis* (*P.G.*, vol. 97, col. 653).

⁶⁸ *P.U.A.E.S.*, Section B, pp. 71-72.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, Section B, p. 72. Devr  sse, mentions important dated churches at Anasarthā, 426 A.D.; Tarutia (Karrātīn), 504-5 A.D.; Zabad, 511 A.D. (*Patriarcat*, pp. 162, 169, 187) while the only dated church at Androna (al-Andarīn) is 528 A.D. (*P.U.A.E.S.*, Section B, p. 58). The eight dated houses from Tarutia (the only town to provide such a sequence) are 368- 539 A.D. (*P.U.A.E.S.*, pp. 76-83). There is of course some ecclesiastical building like the monastic complex at Nawā of 598-99 (Devr  sse, *Patriarcat*, p. 188) which is later but none of these seem to have been important town churches.

phasis on fortification and the first decades of the sixth saw the construction of a few watch-towers.⁷⁰ From the time of the Persian invasion of 540 onwards, however, the area saw a massive increase in military building while the construction of houses, and even churches, almost completely ceases. Sometimes these fortifications are massive, well-planned and constructed works, like the barracks at Androna or the palace complex at Qasr Ibn Wardān, others were more modest forts or towers while in Taroutia the principal church of the town seems to have been converted into a fortress at this period.⁷¹

In military terms, it seems likely that these fortresses were designed to shelter and protect local populations in times of disturbance and they did not constitute a *limes* of the traditional sort and they thus reflect the changing nature of frontier defence and fortification. As long ago as 1907, V. Chapot pointed out how the defence of the frontier was increasingly entrusted to *foederati* or *bucellarii* raised by their own leaders and responsible to them rather than to the Roman state.⁷² They were often mounted and included locally recruited archers, and forts did not have the same importance in this mobile pattern of warfare that they had for the legions and *limitanei* of previous centuries. Subsequent research has tended to confirm and expand Chapot's con-

⁷⁰ See Devr esse, *Patriarcate*, pp. 185, 189 where towers of 526 and 516 A.D. are noted. The 'refuge' at B z al-Khanz r was built by the bishop of neighbouring Anasarthia in 506-7 (*IGLS*, n. 270; *Limes de Chalcis*, pp. 69-70).

⁷¹ Dated fortifications from this period include Ma'an a tower of 540-1 (Lassus, p. 140); Halb n, a tower of 543 (*P.U.A.E.S.*, Section B, p. 18); Harba' ra, fortress of 547-8 (R. Mousterde in *M langes de l'Universit  St Joseph*, vol. 16 (1932), pp. 105, 108); Al-Habb t, fortress of 556-7 (*P.U.A.E.S.*, Section B, pp. 102-3); Androna, fortress/barracks of 558 (*P.U.A.E.S.*, Section B, pp. 50-52); Qasr Ibn Ward n, palace, church and barracks of 564 (*P.U.A.E.S.*, Section B, pp. 39-40); Ab  Habb , fortress of 566 (Lassus, pp. 47-51);  Atsh n, tower of 567 (Lassus, pp. 103-5); Qasr al-Muharram, fortress of 551-74 (Lassus, pp. 143-9); Stabl'Antar, fortress of 577-8 (*P.U.A.E.S.*, Section B, pp. 63-64) Taroutia, church converted into fortress in late sixth or early seventh century (*P.U.A.E.S.*, Section B, pp. 73-74). To these should be added the fortresses in the Orontes valley of the last decades of the sixth century described in *Limes de Chalcis*, pp. 31-5. These included what was perhaps the last attempt ever made to found a Hellenised town in Syria, Maurikopolis, named after the reigning emperor (Maurice 582-602). This was the end of a tradition which had been begun by Alexander, 900 years before.

⁷² V. Chapot, *La Fronti re de l'Euphrate* (Paris 1907) pp. 112, 124, 135. See also pp. 185-86 on the declining importance of fortresses in the imperial strategies of the time.

clusions⁷³ and there is now abundant evidence that the *limitanei* were discarded during the sixth century and replaced, in northern and central Syria at least, by nomad tribes under the hegemony of the Ghassānids.⁷⁴ Liebeschuetz, the most recent commentator on this problem, sees a distinction between the area of Aleppo and the Euphrates valley where imperial troops were still stationed and the imperial government still took a direct interest in defence, and the desert frontier which had been largely entrusted to local tribal leaders.⁷⁵ This picture is not contradicted by the archaeological evidence. As far as we can tell, the fortifications along the fringes of the desert were the work of private individuals rather than the imperial government, which, as Liebeschuetz observes, usually took care that its building achievements were recorded for posterity. Thus the barracks at Androna are known to be the work of one Thomas and his nephew Jakobos, who also built a bath-house for the town close by. Here we can see not a 'limes of Justinian' but rather local landowners, probably supported by their *bucellarii* and by alliances with the neighbouring nomads, taking over responsibility for security in the area. The Imperial government was concerned to protect its lands from organized Persian invasions; when it came to relations with the people of the desert, the local inhabitants were expected to fend for themselves. The evidence would seem to suggest that from the 540s onwards, the settled people of the area were coming under increasing pressure from nomad elements. Such pressure would certainly have increased with the general insecurity which followed the break-up of the Ghassānid hegemony.⁷⁶ By the time of the Arab conquest, none of the cities to the east of the modern main road, except for Chalcis (Qinnasrīn) itself were regarded as worthy of mention by the chroniclers and nomad tribes had penetrated

⁷³ See A.H.M. Jones, *The Later Roman Empire* (London, 1964), vol. 1, pp. 657-668, and J.L. Teall, 'The Barbarians in Justinian's Armies' *Speculum*, 40, (1965) 294-322.

⁷⁴ For the Ghassānids, see the article 'Ghassanids' by Irfan Shahid in the *Encyclopaedia of Islam* (New Edition) vol. 2. The best account of the political history of the dynasty remains T. Nöldeke 'Die Ghassanischen Fürsten aus dem Hause Gafna's' in *Abhandlungen der Königlich Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin*, 1887, notable for the author's mastery of all the languages concerned. Also of importance is the study by Sauvaget, 'Les Ghassanides et Sergiopolis' *B 14* (1939) 115-30.

⁷⁵ W. Liebeschuetz, *Defence*, pp. 495-96.

⁷⁶ Iohannis Ephesini, *Historiae Ecclesiasticae*, pp. 131-32, 136.

right up to the walls of Chalcis and Aleppo.⁷⁷

South from the two provinces of Syria lay the two provinces of Phoenicia, Phoenicia Marittima on the coast and Phoenicia Libanensis inland. The archaeological harvest from these areas has, at least for the sixth century, been very meagre compared with other areas of Syria and Palestine. In a sense this is surprising, since both provinces contained sizeable cities and important administrative centres. Phoenicia Marittima embraced the cities of the coastal plain from Arados in the north to Tyre in the south but only in the hinterland of Tyre and the southern Biqā' did the provinces extend far inland.⁷⁸ The cities of the coast enjoyed considerable prosperity under the Empire. Beirut was famous for its law school⁷⁸ while the epigraphic evidence from the necropolis at Tyre bears vivid witness to the range and diversity of trades that were practiced there.⁸⁰ The evidence of the sixth century, however, suggests that something of this early prosperity had vanished. There were a series of terrible earthquakes in the first half of the sixth century which destroyed the coastal towns between Tripoli and Tyre.⁸¹ The limited archaeological record does not suggest that the second half of the century saw much rebuilding and this is confirmed by the testimony of the Italian pilgrim Antoninus Martyr.⁸² He passed through the coastal cities in about 570 and found them still suffering severely and his conversation with the Bishop of Beirut makes it clear that the school of letters had ceased to function as a result of the earthquake. Only in Tyre did he still find signs of urban prosperity, including public brothels and some textile manufacture. The city put up a prolonged resistance against the Persian invaders and their Jewish allies⁸³ which

⁷⁷ Balādhurī, *Futūh*, pp. 172-73.

⁷⁸ Devréesse, *Patriarcat*, pp. 193-201 gives the basic geography.

⁷⁹ For Beirut in the early Imperial period, see J. Lauffrey, 'Beyrouth, Archeologia et Histoire' in *Aufstieg und Niedergang*, II, 8, pp. 135-163. For the Byzantine period, N. Jidejian, *Beirut through the Ages* (Beirut 1973).

⁸⁰ These inscriptions are published and discussed by J.-P. Rey-Coquais in *Bulletin du Musée de Beyrouth* 29 (1977).

⁸¹ Malalas, *Chronographia*, p. 704.

⁸² See *The Pilgrimage of Antoninus Martyr*, trans. A. Stewart in *Palestine Pilgrims' Texts Society*, vol. 2 (1887) pp. 2-3.

⁸³ M. Avi-Yonah, *The Jews of Palestine* (Oxford 1976) pp. 267-68.

suggests that it was still an important centre in the early seventh century and there is some evidence of an effective resistance to the Arabs.⁸⁴ The small port of Sarepta, described by Antoninus as a small 'and very Christian town' seems to have maintained a modest prosperity⁸⁵ and Justinian founded a shrine at Porphyriion which was still being embellished in 573.⁸⁶ But apart from these examples, the evidence suggests that urban life and prosperity in the coastal towns was greatly reduced by the end of the sixth century; Balādhurī comments on the speed of the Muslim conquest and the lack of effective resistance.⁸⁷

Phoenicia Libanensis lay inland from Phoenicia I. It included the Biqā' valley from Heliopolis (Ba'albek) north, the Anti-Lebanon mountains with their isolated pockets of habitation and the steppe lands which bordered the Syrian desert to the east. Damascus was the most important city of the province and it still retains important traces of its Roman past.⁸⁸ We know that the city walls enclosed roughly the same area as the present old town⁸⁹ and that this long enceinte was effectively defended against the Muslim attackers for six months. It is also clear from literary sources that it was an important ecclesiastical

⁸⁴ This is not mentioned by Balādhurī but there is an extended account in a late MS attributed to Wāqidi which suggests that there was more prolonged resistance, led by the Patrikios, which was only ended by treachery. See M. Chehab, 'Tyre à l'époque des Croisades' in *Bulletin du Musée de Beyrouth* 27 (1975) 2-7.

⁸⁵ See J.B. Pritchard, 'The Roman Port at Sarepta' in *Bulletin du Musée de Beyrouth* 24 (1971) 39-56. The port seems to have flourished from the fourth to the sixth centuries. It is not clear whether this prosperity survived into the seventh century. Balādhurī makes no mention of it and the earliest Arab geographers to notice it simply speak of a village belonging to Tyre. See Le Strange, *Palestine under the Moslems*, p. 531.

⁸⁶ Devréesse, *Patriarcat*, pp. 199-200; Procopius, *Buildings*, pp. 358-59.

⁸⁷ Balādhurī, *Futūh*, p. 150. Further evidence for the decline of the coastal cities is to be found in the case of Caesarea, further south in Palestine. See L.I. Levine, *Caesarea under Roman Rule* (1975) pp. 135-39. Nonetheless urban life did continue into the seventh century and Caesarea is the only city where markets are mentioned at the time of the Arab conquest.

⁸⁸ For Damascus, see K. Wulzinger and C. Watzinger, *Damascus*, vol. 1; *Die Antike Stadt*, vol. 2; *Die Islamische Stadt* (Berlin 1921-24) and J. Sauvaget, 'Le Plan Antique de Damas' in *Syria* 26 (1949) 314-58. For a more recent discussion, see N. Elisséeff, 'Dimashk' in *E.I.*, (2), and article 'Damas à la Lumière des Théories de Jean Sauvaget' by the same author, in: *The Islamic City*, ed. A.H. Hourani and S.M. Stern (1970), pp. 157-77.

⁸⁹ Sauvaget, *Damas*, pp. 331-38.

centre, boasting several fine churches.⁹⁰ The continuous rebuilding of the city has left few traces of its Byzantine period but there is considerable evidence of continuity, both of urban geography and population between late Byzantine and early Islamic times, and that it never ceased to be a truly urban community.⁹¹

After Damascus, Emesa (Homs) was probably the most important city of the province. Here again continuous rebuilding has obscured the traces of the past almost completely, and only a small sixth century chapel seems to have survived from this period. Circumstantial evidence, however, suggests that this was a thriving community at the time of the Arab conquests. Heraclius chose Emesa, not Apamea or Chalcis, as his base of operations in Syria. The inhabitants were able to pay a large sum to the conquering Muslims and were allowed to keep not only their churches and mills but their city walls as well and the surviving traces of the Roman city walls suggest that, even though there were deserted areas within the city where Muslims were settled, a fairly large area was enclosed. During the sixth century the town had, for the first time achieved the title of metropolis, a jealously guarded title which gave it ecclesiastical independence from Damascus and a sign of its continuing vitality.⁹²

Under the Principate, the province had boasted two cities whose magnificent remains still testify to their antique greatness, Palmyra (Tadmur) and Heliopolis (Ba'albek). Most of the great building still to be seen at Palmyra date from before the Roman conquest of 273 or immediately after.⁹³ Both Procopius and Malalas mention that Justinian refortified and garrisoned the largely deserted site during the sixth century⁹⁴ but it is not at all clear how this rebuilding relates to the surviving

⁹⁰ Devréesse, *Patriarcate*, pp. 201-2.

⁹¹ Sauvaget, *Damas*, p. 358. Elisséeff speculates in *Damas*, pp. 167, 171 that the 'degradation' of the classical street plan occurred before the Muslim conquest and, on analogy with Antioch, Apamea and Gerasa, this is almost certainly correct. For other forms of continuity between Byzantine and Islamic Damascus, see the interesting remarks in D. Claude, *Die Byzantinische Stadt im 6. Jahrhundert* (Munich 1969), pp. 44-47, 58-59.

⁹² The best introduction to Emesa is the article 'Hims' by N. Elisséeff in *E.I.* (2), vol. 3 which includes an excellent plan. See also Devréesse, *Patriarcate*, p. 121, n. 4 and for the conquest Balādhuri, *Futūh*, pp. 155-56. For Heraclius at Emesa, *Futūh*, p. 135 and Theophanes, *Chronographia*, pp. 336-7.

⁹³ For a general introduction to Palmyra, see I. Browning, *Palmyra* (1979).

⁹⁴ Procopius, *Buildings*, pp. 176-77; Malalas, *Chronographia*, p. 627.

ruins. There are traces of three Christian basilicas but none of them can be precisely dated and they are not very impressive structures.⁹⁵ There is also evidence that some of the pagan temples were reused as churches.⁹⁶ The Polish excavators have discovered traces of Byzantine building in the Camp of Diocletian, where some of the roadway has been taken over by poor quality houses and the classical plan destroyed. Unfortunately, there are no reliable dates for this activity. Michalowski assumes that the fortifications rebuilt by Justinian were on the site of the Camp of Diocletian and that the Byzantine houses date from the late sixth century on the grounds that the classicising builders of Justinian's period would not have permitted the destruction of the ancient street plan.⁹⁷ However, there is no real evidence for this and the buildings concerned could date from the fifth century when the history of the site is quite obscure. It may well be that the fortifications of Justinian's period were in the massive temenos of the Temple of Bel, the most obviously defendable structure in the city. In the Middle Ages, and indeed until the 1920s, almost the whole town was contained within these walls. The south and east walls of the enclosure have been rebuilt with classical fragments and, while this work is usually ascribed to the Middle Ages, it may easily date from Justinian's period.⁹⁸ Whatever the nature of the work carried out on the emperor's orders, there is little evidence that it was a genuine urban revival. That there was still a (Monophysite) bishop at the beginning of the seventh century is proved by his attendance at a meeting called by the Emperor Heraclius after the reconquest of the area from the Persians.⁹⁹ A few years after this, Khālid b. al-Walīd arrived at the city with a small force. The citizens fortified themselves but soon reached an agreement with the attackers; and the Arab sources mention it in the same way as the remote and seldom visited desert cases further to the East.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁵ Browning, *Palmyra*, p. 169.

⁹⁶ See P. Collart and J. Vicari, *Le Sanctuaire de Baalshamin à Palmyre* (Institut Suisse de Rome, 1969), vol. 1, pp. 76-88.

⁹⁷ See K. Michalowski, *Fouilles de Palmyre*, vol. 2, pp. 54-71 and vol. 3, pp. 41-59 (Warsaw and the Hague 1962-3).

⁹⁸ Browning, *Palmyra*, pp. 102-3.

⁹⁹ Michael the Syrian, *Chronique*, p. 412; Devréesse, *Patriarcat*, pp. 102, 206.

¹⁰⁰ Balādhurī, *Futūh*, pp. 132-3; Tabari, *Ta'rikh*, vol. 1, p. 2109.

Heliopolis (Ba'albek) in the fifth and sixth centuries seems to have been a more populous settlement than Palmyra. Pagan rites lingered on here later than in most of urban Syria and, although a Christian basilica was constructed in the court of the mighty temple of Jupiter, the adherents of the new religion must have felt overawed or even intimidated by the enormous physical relics of the old.¹⁰¹ The Byzantine period saw the fortification of the temple precincts to form a smaller and more secure enclosed area and there survives a crudely cut but interesting inscription commemorating part of this process; it states that one of the towers was constructed by the people of the Macedonian quarter of the city in 635-6, just one year before the Muslim conquest.¹⁰² This suggests that there was still a Greek element in the population and a common effort against the invaders by the people of the town, and this picture is reinforced by the Arab accounts. Balādhurī gives the text of the treaty by which the city surrendered in full. It divides the population into three ethnic groups, *Rūm*, (Greeks), *Furs* (Persians) and *'Arab*. They are to be allowed to keep their property, churches and mills. Those who convert to Islam will be treated as equals while those who do not will pay extra taxes. The merchants of the town will be free to travel in all Muslim territories. The Greeks were singled out for harsher treatment, probably because they still represented a security threat; they were not allowed to live in villages, although they were allowed to pasture their cattle in the countryside. After a few months, they were to be permitted to leave the area. Some of the Persians were later settled in depopulated coastal cities.¹⁰³ Heliopolis was clearly a fairly modest agricultural community

¹⁰¹ For the Christian basilica, since demolished by the excavators, see T. Wiegand, *Baalbek* (Berlin and Leipzig 1921), vol. 2, pp. 130-43. The Byzantine town is also discussed in the recent (1967) vol. 6 of *IGLS*, edited by J.-P. Rey-Coquais, pp. 38-39 where the austere format of earlier volumes has been expanded to give much more background information. For the survival of paganism to the end of the sixth century see Iohannis Ephesini, *Historiae Ecclesiasticae*, p. 114 and Michael the Syrian, *Chronique*, vol. 2, pp. 262-3, 318-19.

¹⁰² *IGLS*, n. 2828.

¹⁰³ Balādhurī, *Futūh*, p. 154. The Persians were probably left over from the Persian occupation which had been ended by Heraclius. The confused situation in Persia had meant that some Persians were reluctant to return to their native land (Agapius, *'Unwān*, pp. 465-6). They are also mentioned at Homs (*Futūh*, pp. 139, 175).

with some travelling merchants but there is no mention of markets or industry in the town.

We have little clue as to the fate of the rural areas of the province in this period. There is no evidence of fortification at this period along the Strata Diocletiana between Damascus and Palmyra which seems to have fallen into complete decay by the sixth century. The evidence suggests that the 'defence' of the area east of the Anti-Lebanon was largely in the hands of the Ghassānids who are known to have constructed a fort at Admedera (Dumayr)¹⁰⁴ and are recorded as patrons of monasteries at Nabak¹⁰⁵ and Qasr al-Hayr al-Gharbī.¹⁰⁶

In the last of the provinces to be considered here, Arabia, the archaeological remains are much more abundant than in either of the Phoenicias. Here too, however, there has been more surveying than excavation, with all the disadvantages that entails for precise dating. The province had been created in 106 A.D. when the Nabatean kingdom had been incorporated into the Empire, but had been truncated in the middle of the fourth century when Petra, and all the area to the south of the Wādī 'l-Hasā, had been attached to Palestine III. In the north, the province stretched almost to Damascus. The eastern boundary was formed by the desert while the western boundary ran through the hills to the east of the Jordan valley and along the shore of the Dead Sea. The terrain varied greatly between the inaccessible lava-covered slopes of the Jabal al-Durūz and the Lajā, the fertile plains of the Hawrān, the limestone hills around Gerasa (Jarash) and the steppe-land of the south-eastern frontier.

Bostra (Busrā) was the capital of the province from its foundation and the centre of ecclesiastical administration.¹⁰⁷ The modern town, built, like its ancient predecessor, from the unlovely local basalt, occupies much of the antique site and apart from some soundings in the Cathedral and restorations in the theatre and the mosque of Umar,

¹⁰⁴ J. Nasrullah, 'Le Qalamoun à l'époque Romano-Byzantine', *Annales Archéologiques Syriennes* 2 (1952) 167-8 and 8 (1958) 78-9.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 2, p. 156.

¹⁰⁶ D. Schlumberger, 'Les Fouilles de Qasr el-Heir el-Gharbi' in *Syria* 20 (1939) 363.

¹⁰⁷ The main sources on Bostra are R.E. Brünnow and A. von Domaszewski, *Die Provincia Arabia*, vol. 3 (1909), pp. 1-88 and *P.U.A.E.S.*, Section A, part 4.

there has been little opportunity for excavation. The remains of the early Imperial period are conspicuous, the gates, colonnaded streets, the basilica and the great theatre all bear witness to the first stage of the city's prosperity. The Christian monuments are less magnificent; with the exception of the Cathedral, the churches are not of great consequence and there is little sign of other building from the fifth and sixth centuries. The Cathedral was built in 512-13¹⁰⁸ and there is epigraphic evidence of other building during the early years of Justinian's reign but nothing thereafter.¹⁰⁹ We know the names of two later archbishops from literary sources¹¹⁰ and it was probably still the centre of the civil administration of the area. The last *dux* whose name is known seems to have been Paullus in 535, but in 536 Justinian appointed a governor with the new title of '*moderator*' to the province¹¹¹ and he is also said to have provided funds to house the '*epitropos*' of the city.¹¹² Thereafter there is a long gap in our knowledge; that there was still a *dux* in the city is confirmed in an account in John of Ephesus of events which followed the arrest of the Ghassānid leader al-Mundhir in 584.¹¹³ It seems that Al-Mundhir had left arms and other possessions in the city which his Arab supporters demanded. The *dux* of the city refused their request and drew up his army to resist them but he was defeated and killed. There was much Ghassānid activity in the area, one of their centres was at Jābiya, to the west of the city and a house was constructed at Hayat on the eastern edge of the Jabal al-Durūz by al-Mundhir's administrator (*epitropos*) Flavios Seos, in 578.¹¹⁴ It would seem as if they ran something of a parallel administration in the area and relations between them and whatever Byzantine officials there were in Bostra must often have been strained. There was still a patrician, the generic Arab

¹⁰⁸ *Provincia Arabia*, vol. 3, pp. 30-5. *P.U.A.E.S.*, Section A, part 4, pp. 281-6 and J.W. Crowfoot, *Churches at Bostra and Samaria-Sebaste* (British School of Archaeology in Jerusalem, Supplementary Paper 4, 1937).

¹⁰⁹ Justinian is said to have constructed a poor-house in the city: Procopius, *Buildings*, pp. 358-9.

¹¹⁰ Devrèsse, *Patriarcāt*, p. 228.

¹¹¹ *Provincia Arabia*, vol. 3, pp. 284, 297. *Provincia Arabia*, p. 297 also identifies a *dux* of 580 in an inscription from Ziza whose interpretation and dating are not entirely clear.

¹¹² See M.R. Savignac and M. Abel, *Revue Biblique*, Nouvelle Serie, 2 (1905) 600, n. 9.

¹¹³ Iohannis Ephesini, *Historiae Ecclesiasticae*, p. 132.

¹¹⁴ Waddington, nn. 2110, 2111; Devrèsse, *Patriarcāt*, p. 230.

term for a Byzantine official, at the time of the Islamic conquest.¹¹⁵

The political history of Bostra in the sixth century may be obscure but we have a clearer idea about the economic role of the city and its region than most other areas in the period. Bostra clearly served as an entrepôt for Arabian trade, particularly with the expanding commercial centre of Makka whose merchants frequently travelled to the area; it was on such a journey that the Prophet Muhammad met the monk Bahira in Bostra from whom he acquired much of his understanding of Christianity and the incident is symbolic of the interchange between the two areas. Both the Arabic literature and the account of the pilgrim Antoninus make it plain that the goods the Arabs sought were locally produced agricultural products, grain, wine and olive-oil: manufactured goods like textiles or arms are never mentioned. Observers have noted how far the cultivated area extended in late Antiquity and the scattered remains of the small towns to the south of the Hawrān testify to widespread settlement; clearly agriculture was expanding to meet the demand. The accounts of the Muslim conquest, without any prolonged opposition, confirm this impression of a largely agricultural community, supplying wheat to the invading armies.¹¹⁶

The other large classical town sites of the area, show a picture of stagnation or decline. At Canatha (Qanawāt) all the major buildings date from the period of the early empire and, although the name of a fifth century bishop is preserved, there are no other signs of activity.¹¹⁷ Likewise, Philippopolis (Shahba), with its ambitious urban plan, complete with palace, baths, theatres and walls, does not seem to have thrived after its third century foundation.¹¹⁸ Further south, Philadelphia (ʿAmmān) can boast few remains from the late antique period, although sixth sources give the city a rank second only to Bostra in the province.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁵ Balādhuri, *Futūh*, p. 134.

¹¹⁶ The agricultural trade is described by R. Paret, 'Les Villes de Syrie du Sud et les Routes Commerciales d'Arabie à la fin du VI^e siècle' in *Akten des XI Internationalen Byzantinisten-Kongress, Munich, 1958* (Munich 1960), ed. F. Dölger and H.-G. Beck. For the extent of agricultural land, see *P. U. A. E. S.*, Section II, A 2, p. 145.

¹¹⁷ *Provincia Arabia*, vol. 3, pp. 107-44; Devréesse, *Patriarcate*, pp. 233-4.

¹¹⁸ *Provincia Arabia*, vol. 3, pp. 145-79; Devréesse, *Patriarcate*, p. 236.

¹¹⁹ Devréesse, *Patriarcate*, pp. 219-20; F. Zayadine, 'Excavations in the Upper Citadel of Amman' in

The best preserved and most carefully studied city in the area is, of course, Gesara (Jarash).¹²⁰ Thanks to the excavations carried out by Yale University and others between 1928 and 1934, we have a clearer idea of the development of Casara throughout antiquity than of any other site considered in this survey. The pattern elucidated is typical of many cities in the area. The original, Hellenistic settlement around the acropolis was vastly expanded during the Roman period and during the second century A.D. the city received an extremely impressive monumental complex. There was the great temple of Artemis, the three colonnaded streets, the oval forum, the nymphaeum, the baths and two theatres, all constructed to a very high standard. The third and fourth centuries saw a marked decline, but the fifth saw renewed activity on a different pattern.¹²¹ Most of the buildings from this period were churches, many with the beautiful mosaic floors, characteristic of the area at the time. The first of these to be constructed was the cathedral of the fourth century but the greatest building period was from 464 to 533 when some seven churches, many of them substantial buildings were erected.¹²² Thereafter the pace of construction slows down dramatically; apart from a doubtful date of 565 for the Propylea church,¹²³ the only other construction was the small church in an outlying part of the town built by Bishop Genesius in 611.¹²⁴ As the excavators point out, these churches are often constructed of reused materials and are on a much smaller scale than the great second century works but they do show continued urban vitality at this period.

If the rhythm of church building provides the most obvious index of urban prosperity, there are other, less obvious indications which

Annual of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan, vol. 22 (1977-78) 20-57, reports the remains of a Byzantine church of unknown date.

¹²⁰ The results of the excavations are published in *Gerasa: City of the Decapolis*, ed., C.H. Kraeling (American Schools of Oriental Research, 1938).

¹²¹ The general history of the city is discussed by C.H. Kraeling in *Gerasa*, pp. 27-69.

¹²² The churches are discussed by J.W. Crowfoot in *Gerasa*, pp. 171-262. For their place in the local tradition of ecclesiastical architecture, see also *Early Churches in Palestine* (London 1941) Schweich Lecture in Biblical Archaeology, 1939, by the same author.

¹²³ The inscription (*Gerasa*, n. 331, pp. 485-6) simply says that the *diaconia* was constructed in 565 but this may have been an addition to an already existing building (*Gerasa*, pp. 228-9).

¹²⁴ *Gerasa*, pp. 249-51.

point in the same direction. While new religious buildings were being constructed, the magnificent relics of the old religion were not demolished but simply allowed to decay. Just across the alley from the cathedral complex, the vast court of the temple of Artemis was in ruins and used as a potter's workshop; the presence of a large, semi-derelict area in the heart of the town does not suggest great economic vitality.¹²⁵ The same picture emerges from the history of the baths at Gerasa. In the second century, the city had been endowed with those vast baths which were such a typical product of the early imperial period. We have no way of saying when these baths went out of use but in 454-5 new baths were built, by the Bishop this time, itself an indication of the changing order. Not only were these baths very much smaller than either of the earlier structures, they were also largely constructed of re-used masonry. These baths of Placcus were not, however, private baths; they opened on to the street near the cathedral in an area which was the centre of the late antique town. They were restored in 584.¹²⁶ Clearly the city could no longer support even one of the giant edifices of the earlier period; the worthy bishop therefore built new baths, on a much smaller scale for the reduced population. The baths appear as a paradigm of late antique city; urban life continued, but the scale was greatly reduced and impoverished.

The remains on the streets tell the same story. As at Antioch and Apamea, the last century of Byzantine rule sees the invasion of the classical street plan by debris and secondary structures and it is clear that the regular pattern of colonnaded streets, tetrastylon and forum had decayed considerably before the arrival of the Muslims.¹²⁷ The artefacts present a less clear picture; the glassware dates almost entirely from the fourth and fifth centuries, with some earlier examples.¹²⁸ Coinage, on the other hand, continues, after a dip in the second half of

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 68, 133.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 265-9.

¹²⁷ For the general nature of the decline, see *Gerasa*, pp. 67-8; for the area around the south tetrastylon, pp. 103-5; for the decay of the oval forum, pp. 157-8. The classical street plan had been disrupted too by the building of the Propylea church which blocked the ceremonial way to the temple of Artemis (see note 90). For the decay of a more modest street in a residential area, see p. 293-4.

¹²⁸ *Gerasa*, p. 518.

the fifth century, to be fairly abundant until the death of Justin II in 578, after which the quantity declines dramatically.¹²⁹

As in northern Syria, the small towns seem to have been less affected by the changes of the sixth century than the larger cities. At the extreme southern edge of the Hawrān, on the fringes of the desert in an area which has not boasted any permanent settlement for many centuries lie the ruins of Umm al-Jimāl, perhaps the most completely preserved small town in the entire area. The site boasts a number of substantial houses and a series of churches dated between 345 and 557¹³⁰ (almost exactly the same chronological limits as the main church building period in Gerasa). There are no traces of classical urban planning and the streets are narrow and winding between the blank outside walls of the houses. A praetorium, or administrative centre was constructed in the fourth century but apparently abandoned by the mid-sixth when the door lintel was removed for use in the new cathedral¹³¹ but, apart from the churches and a barracks of the early fifth century, no other public buildings have been identified. None of the private houses can be dated exactly but they would seem to date from the fifth and sixth centuries. There are many similar but smaller settlements in the area, like Umm al-Quttayn and Sama where the monastery of St. George was constructed as late as 624-5.¹³² These communities are clearly agricultural in character and the Princeton expedition noted traces of ancient farming throughout the area and it must have been here that the wheat, wine and oil that the Arabs came to buy were produced. Further to the south-west, the town of Mādabā seems to have enjoyed considerable prosperity at the end of the sixth and the beginning of the seventh centuries. The churches of Mādabā and the nearby sanctuary on Mt. Nebo, famous for their floor mosaics, are all very late indeed. Of some nine dated Christian monuments in the area, the earliest is from 578 A.D. while the latest belongs to the early eighth century.¹³³ Mādabā was an ancient town by this time but it seems to have

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 502-3.

¹³⁰ See *P. U. A. E. S.*, II, A. 3, pp. 154-94.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 164-6.

¹³² *P. U. A. E. S.*, II, A. 2, pp. 63-148.

¹³³ For the monuments of Madaba and the surrounding area, see Devréesse, *Patriarcat*, pp. 220-22; S.

enjoyed a building boom when many other areas were stagnating; the prosperity may have been agricultural, the area has fertile fields and sufficient rainfall for dry-farming but it may also have benefitted from pilgrims coming from Jerusalem to visit the nearby shrine.

The defence of the frontiers of the Provincia Arabia have recently been the subject of considerable scholarly attention.¹³⁴ The idea of a *limes*, an organized line of defences, has been discarded in favour of a pattern of largely independent forts, providing protection and collecting tolls at important bridges or watering points. As in northern Syria, there seems to be no indication of Imperial involvement in the defence of the area after the mid-sixth century. While larger settlements like Bostra or Umm al-Jimāl had walls, which may or may not have been maintained up to the Arab conquest, many smaller communities were unfortified. It can only be assumed that many of these areas were under the aegis of local nomad leaders, the Ghassānids or their successors and it has recently been suggested, on the authority of later Arab traditions, that some of the forts previously ascribed to the Byzantine government were in fact constructed by the Ghassānids.¹³⁵ The Provincia Arabia was spared the damage caused by repeated Persian invasions and there is no parallel for the private fortress building in the second half of the sixth century, which is so apparent in Syria. Accounts of the Muslim conquest of the area reflect this apparent military unpreparedness.¹³⁶ Only at Bostra was there any resistance and this was not very prolonged; Jarash is simply mentioned in a list of towns taken while communities like Umm al-Jimāl and Mādabā are not noticed at all; perhaps they felt they were merely exchanging one group of semi-

Saller, 'The Memorial of Moses on Mt. Nebo' and M. Piccinillo, 'New Discoveries on Mt. Nebo', in: *Annual of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan* 21 (1976) 55-60. For the importance of pilgrims in the economy of the area, see M. Avi Yonah, 'The Economics of Byzantine Palestine', *Israel Exploration Journal* 8 (1958) 39-51.

¹³⁴ For a general history of the frontier area, see S.T. Parker, 'Towards a History of the Limes Arabicus' in *Roman Frontier Studies* (Published as *British Archaeological Reports, International Series* 71, iii, pp. 865-78) which gives a useful bibliography. For the nature of the late antique *limes* in this area, see G.W. Bowersock, 'Limes Arabicus', *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 80 (1976) 219-29 where the idea of the *limes* as a line or system of fortification is effectively challenged.

¹³⁵ Bowersock, 'Limes Arabicus', pp. 226-7.

¹³⁶ Balādhuri, *Futūh*, pp. 138-9.

nomad Arab protectors for another.

During the sixth century, Syria underwent a series of profound social, economic and cultural changes which foreshadow and to some extent explain the Arab conquest. The most obvious of these is the decline of the classical city with all that implied for the Greek civilization of the area. The attempts of Justinian to restore the ancient pattern at Antioch after 540 seems to have been the last attempt to revive antique forms of urban life; some cities like Gerasa seem to have decayed peacefully while others were the victims of sudden disasters, natural as at Beirut or man-made as at Apamea. Everywhere the pattern seems to be similar; the colonnaded streets and open spaces are invaded by poor quality structures and the great public buildings of early antiquity are allowed to decay. Even in cities where urban life of some sort continued without interruption, like Damascus and Aleppo, the evidence suggests that the classical street plan had been altered to something resembling the Mediaeval pattern long before the Muslims invaded. The settlements that saw any growth showed no signs of following the classical tradition; settlements like Al-Bāra in the north or Umm al-Jimāl in the south had narrow, winding streets and an almost total absence of public buildings apart from churches and monasteries.

Not only were the forms of urban life different, so too was the distribution of urban prosperity. It seems clear that the cities on or near the Mediterranean coast were most severely affected by the economic and demographic crisis, Antioch, Seleucea, Laodicea and Beirut are notable examples while the cities that fared best were those on the fringes of the desert, Damascus, Emesa, Aleppo and the areas where there seems to have been increased activity in the sixth century were those on the borders between the desert and the town, the market places, in fact, where the *badū* could buy the agricultural products they needed. In short the shift of population and wealth away from the coast, usually ascribed to the effects of the Muslim conquest, seems to have occurred during the preceding century.

Clearly these changes were closely related to the rise of the Ghassānids. These Arab tribal leaders did not simply replace the *limitanei* in defending the borders of the empire, they also exercised considerable authority over the settled areas as well. The decline of the imperial administration throughout the eastern borderlands of Syria and Arabia (with the significant exception of the Euphrates-Antioch cor-

ridor) and Arabia resulted in the transfer of power to nomad leaders like the Ghassānids or local notables like Thomas who built the barracks at Androna. Bostra the provincial capital of Arabia was sacked for the first time by the Arabs not in 634 by the followers of Muhammad but in 583 by supporters of the Ghassānids. Well before the arrival of the Muslims, Arab tribes were established around Aleppo and Chalcis and even in Damascus, authority in the city seems to have been at least partly in Arab hands. The rise of the Ghassānids was more than a change in military policy; it was the product of long-term demographic and social change in eastern Syria and Arabia. The work begun by the Ghassānids was completed, the next century, by the Umayyads.

By the year 600, the geography of Syria had acquired the form it was to take for the whole of the early middle ages, the decline of the coastal areas, the nomadisation of the steppe-land that bordered on the desert with the comparative prosperity of the towns along the desert edge; all urban communities seem to have approached the condition of the large agricultural village. How then are we to account for these developments? There is not space in this article to examine all the possibilities in detail but some suggestions can be made.

Earthquakes destroyed the physical structure of many of the cities of antiquity and there can be little doubt that the sixth century was a bad one for major seismic disturbances. But this can never be more than part of the explanation; as Foss has pointed out,¹³⁷ the real disaster is not the earthquake itself but the failure to rebuild after it; if the community is large and prosperous and there is a place and a need for urban life, the earthquake will be no more than a tragic but short term interruption in the history of the city.

Invasion, too, had a devastating effect on some cities, but it remains to enquire why these cities were so vulnerable to attack and why these attacks seem to have had such serious consequences. Apamea was sacked in 573 with terrible results, Gesara does not seem to have been visited by outside invasions until the seventh century and yet the pattern of urban change and decay does not seem to have been greatly different. The most important and lasting of the outside attacks, the Persian invasion and occupation of the early seventh century, occurred

¹³⁷ C. Foss, *Ephesus after Antiquity*, pp. 103-5.

when these changes were already well advanced; no doubt in some areas, the long years of fighting accelerated the process but it did not begin it.

It has suggested that a slight climate change and particularly the effect of increased rainfall on Mediterranean valleys,¹³⁸ the decay of agricultural terracing and the creation of marshes in the valley bottoms, were important causes of economic decline in the sixth century. If rainfall did increase significantly, it would go some way to explaining the apparent flourishing of dry-farming communities on the fringes of the desert during the first half of the century. But it is hard to see that comparatively small changes could have a catastrophic effect on agriculture in the coastal areas unless there was neither the labour nor the incentive to adapt to the new conditions.

The decline of Mediterranean trade may have been an important factor. No aspect of the end of antiquity has received so much scholarly attention as this and it is not the purpose of this paper to examine it in detail. It is hard to see, however, that Italy and north-western Europe and Greece would have provided sufficiently attractive markets to sustain a vast commerce. Furthermore, there is no mention of any such trade in the Arabic sources and where commerce is discussed, it is a local, land-based trade in agricultural products. If maritime trade had been an important factor in the prosperity of the coastal cities in earlier centuries, its reduced scale in the sixth century must have had a damaging effect.¹³⁹

All the factors discussed above may have contributed to the changes but to get a fuller picture we have to look at the demographic pattern. It is increasingly clear that the fifth century and the first few decades of the sixth saw the population of the area reach a plateau. Then in 540 bubonic plague struck and the consequences for the popu-

¹³⁸ C. Vita Vinzi, *The Mediterranean Valley* (Cambridge 1969) for discussions of this idea.

¹³⁹ For a useful discussion of the decline of a Mediterranean port in Italy at this time, see B. Ward-Perkins, 'Luni - The Decline and Abandonment of a Roman Town' in *British Archaeological Reports. Supplementary Series*, vol. 41, ii (1978), pp. 313-21 where the early sixth century sees the end of imported pottery and glass and a 'demographic and economic collapse'.

lation were dramatic.¹⁴⁰ The plague was not a single outburst, but, like the Black Death in the fourteenth century, the first of a recurrent series of terrible visitations which lasted well into the seventh century. The literary evidence leaves us in no doubt as to its devastating impact and, by analogy with the fourteenth century, the population may have declined by about one-third as a result. Michael Dols has recently pointed out that the mortality was not evenly distributed; the heaviest toll is likely to have occurred where the population was most dense. Urban populations would tend to suffer worse than rural ones and nomad communities, where rats would find it difficult to survive, would be least affected of all. It was when the Muslim armies occupied cities and other settled areas that they too became victims of the disease. The impact of such a mortality on the economy and society of the area would be hard to overestimate. Moreover it tallies precisely with the picture of urban decline, the relative resilience of rural communities and nomad encroachment which we find in the literary and archaeological evidence. The loss of population was the underlying cause which meant that earthquakes and invasions were so damaging.

The transition from antique to Mediaeval Syria occurred in the years after 540, not after 640 and the Muslim invasion was more a consequence than a cause of changes which had been taking place over the previous century.

¹⁴⁰ The fullest recent discussion of demographic trends is in E. Patlagean, *Pauvreté* pp. 84-92 where great emphasis is laid on the catastrophic effects of plague. For more general views of the 'plague of Justinian' see P. Allen, 'The «Justinianic» Plague', *B* 49 (1979) 5-20; M. Dols, *The Black Death in the Middle East* (Princeton 1977), pp. 13-28.

MONASTERIES AND THEIR PATRONS IN THE TENTH AND ELEVENTH CENTURIES.

ROSEMARY MORRIS / MANCHESTER

In 986, as the chronicler Leo the Deacon recorded, the region around Constantinople was hit by an earthquake, followed by tidal waves in the Sea of Marmara. Amidst the widespread destruction, a curious casualty was recorded. A stylite, who had passed his days on a column near Chalcedon was drowned as the waters struck his platform. The *stylos* was not rebuilt and no solitary came forward to continue a tradition long established in the place.¹

This unfortunate occurrence may serve as a symbol of an important turning-point in the history of Byzantine monasticism: the move away from the following of individual *askêsis* in solitude towards the incorporation of personal spiritual development into the context of the communal monastic life.

The tenth and eleventh centuries saw the growth of what has been termed 'hybrid' monasticism: a mingling of the traditions of the solitary and communal religious life. It is the purpose of this study to examine the process by which this came about and to discuss what effect the new monastic orientation had on the direction of lay patronage. It will be confined to Asia Minor and the eastern Mediterranean; similar developments were taking place in Byzantine Italy, but deserve a study of their own.²

¹ *Leo Diac.*, x, 10, p. 109.

² For Italy, see A. Guillou, *Studies on Byzantine Italy* (1970) and the archival material from Sicily and Southern Italy being published under his direction by the *Ist. Sic. di Studi Biz. e Neoellenici*. For a fine discussion of the merging of Byzantine monastic traditions at this period see D. Papachryssanthou, 'La vie monastique dans les campagnes byzantines du VIII^e au XI^e siècles', *REB* 43 (1973) 158-82.

At the beginning of the tenth century, the evolution of hybrid monasticism had hardly begun. In the provinces of the empire for which we have information-and it should be stated at the outset that they are few - we hear of distinct forms of the religious life being practised. A monastic atlas of the period would reveal, as well as the great communal houses of Constantinople, Thessalonika and the west coast of Asia Minor, the sites of solitary ascetics, stylites and hermits. The western coast of Asia Minor was probably the area, outside the capital, most heavily populated with monks. It also supported a great variety of religious life-styles and is of crucial importance at this period since virtually all the most celebrated religious leaders of the day either carried out their work there, or passed through the region at the formative period of their ministry. The fertile, flat lands bordering the Sea of Marmara and the Aegean supported flourishing communal houses in the Pachomian tradition, while the inhospitable ranges behind them provided the solitude - the *êremia* - sought by the emulators of St. Anthony.³

The *Monastic Constitutions* of St. Basil provided the definition of communal monasticism most familiar to Byzantines of the period:

I term the common life [Basil wrote] that in which personal property is discarded, the conflict of wills is eradicated and all tumult, strife and conflicts are trampled underfoot. All is held in common: souls, thoughts, bodies.⁴

Unity of endeavour could only be achieved by unity of experience, but, if successful, the truly communal and unselfish life could come as closely as might be permitted to humans to the 'life of the angels'. The *angelikon bion*, the goal of Byzantine contemplatives could, in Basil's view, be achieved only in the communal house, the *koinobion*, where

Men of different races and countries
turning to this perfection, may live together

³ For some of the vast literature on the early days of Byzantine monasticism, H.-G. Beck, *Kirche und theologische Literatur im byzantinischen Reiche* (Munich, 1959), espec. pp. 120-40. St. Athanasios' *Life of St. Anthony*, trans. R.T. Meyer (*Ancient Christian Writers*, x, 1950), is vital for the understanding of Byzantine monastic tradition.

⁴ Basil, *Constitutiones monasticae*, PG 31, cols. 1521 ff.

in harmony, so that they may contemplate
one soul in many bodies and reveal that many
bodies have been fashioned into one consciousness.⁵

The physical conditions in which this spiritual unity might be achieved had already been laid down by the sixth century. Justinian had declared that

In all monasteries which are called *koinobia*,
we order that, according to the monastic canons,
all should live in one habitation and sleep in
one dormitory⁶

A strong suspicion of individual spiritual initiative is evident in the Justinianic approach. It envisages the possibility that monks might want to live a hesychastic life, but that only a few would be capable of 'leading a perfect life in contemplation' and even then, should only be allowed to do so within the confines of their monasteries.⁷ But the admission of the possibility of the solitary life within the monastic community opened the way to official acceptance of houses formed from members living individually in *kellia*, but still reflecting, in their joint liturgical observances, that unity advocated by Basil. By the tenth century, however, these *lavrae* no longer retained the crucial element of distance between the *kellia* as had their prototypes in the Palestinian desert. The word *lavra* came to be applied to a mixed form of monasticism, usually characterised by a communal monastery (*koinobion*) to which were linked the cells of the anchorites.⁸

Although the type of establishment founded might not have conformed to the strict concept of the sixth-century *lavra*, it is important to bear in mind that many of the monastic founders of the tenth and

⁵ *loc. cit.*, col. 1581.

⁶ Justinian, *Novella*, cxxiii, c. 36. This provision was repeated in the ninth-century legal compilation, the *Basilica*, IV, 1, iv.

⁷ Justinian, *Novella*, v, c. 3 bans the formation of non-coenobitic houses. This clause, interestingly, is not cited in the *Basilica*, an indication of the spread of lavriote monasticism by the late ninth century. Canon xli of the Council in Trullo (692), made provision for the solitary life to be practised after at least four years of communal life, but even then only within the confines of the monastery. cf. *RP*, ii, pp. 401-6.

⁸ Papachryssanthou, *Vie monastique*, 168; 172; 175.

eleventh centuries considered they were founding such houses. They paid the same attention, for instance, to the concept of *êremia* which had influenced the fathers of monasticism. This solitude could particularly be found in the mountains. The theological significance of the concept of 'nearness to God' in both the physical and metaphysical sense which height could bring - whether in the form of mountains or artificially constructed pillars - was associated with a far more primitive admiration for men who could survive in the harshness of a mountain landscape. Survival in the unpredictable dangers of climate and nature was a mark of sanctity. The concept of the 'holy mountain' played an important part in the thinking of monastic founders of this period.

The growth of lavriote influence monasticism in the mountains of western Asia Minor gives some strength to the traditions prevailing in the tenth century that the communities had been founded by monks fleeing from Palestine.⁹

Certainly, the Lavra of St. Sabas in Palestine was a place of pilgrimage for such founders as St. Lazaros of Mount Galesion (c. 1009) and, in the late eleventh century, St. Christodoulos required the monks on Patmos to follow the liturgical customs of St. Sabas.¹⁰ So although it is impossible to establish a firm personal link between the Lavra of St. Sabas and the houses on Olympos in the crucial seventh century (when such a migration must have taken place), the 'sentimental attachment' was strong enough in the eleventh century to play an important part in the formation of later monastic constitutions.

The spread of lavriote monasticism, a common characteristic of the 'holy mountains' of western Asia Minor must chiefly be explained by the charisma of its proponents, but the question of *why* this particular form of monasticism should have been followed by so many of them

⁹ The hagiographers of the saints on Mount Latros in the tenth century maintained that monks from Rhaïthu on the Red Sea had founded their communities, cf. *Vita S. Pauli junioris* (henceforward *Life of St. Paul the Younger*), ed. H. Delehay, *AB* 11 (1892), c. 8, p. 33; *Vita S. Nicephori. episcopi Milesii* (*Life of St. Nikephoros*), ed. H. Delehay, *AB* 14 (1895), c. 14 (1895), c. 14, p. 145. See also H. Ahrweiler, 'L'Asie mineure et les invasions arabes (VII^e-IX^e siècles)' *RH* 207/1 (1962) 1-32, repr. in *Études sur les structures administratives de Byzance* (1971).

¹⁰ *Vita S. Lazari Galesiotae* (*Life of St. Lazaros*), *AS* nov. iii, cols. 508 ff. cf. c. 16, p. 514; c. 17, p. 514; c. 20, p. 516. *Regula edita a Sancto Christodulo pro monasterio Sancti Ioannis Theologi in insula Patmo ab eo condito*, *MM*, vi, pp. 59-80 cf. pp. 71. (Henceforward *Hypotypôsis of Christodoulos*)

must first be answered. The solution lies in an examination of the customs of the houses in which these founders spent the years of their novitiate. Since the monastic traditions of Byzantium were transmitted by individuals, rather than by orders as in the west, their early spiritual training and the personal influence of teachers and spiritual fathers were the most important factors in dictating what type of religious life was later followed.

We know from the report of the contemporary historian, Genesios, that monks from the 'holy mountains' of Olympos, Kyminas, Ida (all in Asia Minor) and Athos all took part in the processions celebrating the triumph of the icons in 843. By the end of the ninth centuries these areas probably supported a flourishing monastic population.¹¹ The longest recognised of the 'holy mountains' was Olympos.¹² Its importance for the history of monastic foundation in this period lies in the fact, that, at the beginning of the tenth century, it was popular with young men seeking the religious life. The literary sources suggest that the foundations they visited were not the great coenobitic houses of the lower slopes (though these may well still have attracted many recruits), but houses higher in the mountains. The earliest known lavriote house is the confusingly named Lavra of the Kellia, in existence by the end of the eighth century, and controlled by the scholar and historian Michael Psellos in the eleventh. It may have been situated near Atroa.¹³ Another lavra later associated with Psellos was that of Kathara, founded at the end of the eighth or the beginning of the ninth century.¹⁴ The attraction of the upper ridges of Olympos for those wishing formal lavriote communities was widespread enough by the end of the ninth century for Georgian monks to be attracted to the area.

¹¹ *Genes.* p. 82.

¹² R. Janin, *La géographie ecclésiastique de l'empire byzantine, I. Le siège de Constantinople et le patriarcat oecuménique*, tome iv, *Les Églises et les monastères du grands centres byzantines* (Paris 1975) pp. 127-91. The study of B. Menthon, *Une terre de légende: L'Olympe de Bithynie* (Paris 1935) contains misleading maps. We still await a thorough archaeological survey of the region. Until then, many of the houses mentioned in literary texts will remain unidentified on the ground.

¹³ Janin, *op. cit.*, pp. 160-1.

¹⁴ *ibid.*, p. 160.

The solitary hermit, Hilarion, built a small church which later became the nucleus of the Lavra of the Theotokos at Krania. The church was built with the aid of neighbouring coenobitic monks, who were probably Greek, but Hilarion was soon joined by three of his compatriots and the lavra was probably largely Georgian in the tenth century.¹⁵ There were at least two other Georgian houses on Olympos, though it is difficult to know whether they were *koinobia* or *lavrae*: the Monasteries of Saints Cosmas and Damian and Spelaïôn. The name of the latter might suggest that it consisted of a series of cave cells.¹⁶

Whilst the history of these houses is, in itself, of importance, three *lavrae* in particular played an important rôle in the spiritual formation of celebrated figures of the tenth century. In the early years of the century, the Lavra of St. Zacharias received the future stylite, Luke the Younger,¹⁷ and the Lavra of St. Elias received as a postulant Basil, the elder brother of St. Paul of Latros, who, as we know from Paul's biography, introduced him to the monastic life.¹⁸ Somewhat later, the founders of the Georgian house on Athos, Saints John and Euthymios, spent some time at the Lavra of Krania, as did their celebrated countryman, John Tornik.¹⁹

St. Paul of Latros supplies the next link in the chain of Lavriote development. The mountain of Latros (Beş Parmak Dag) stands in the same kind of geographical relationship to the Maeander valley as does Olympos to the fertile coastlands of the Sea of Marmara.²⁰ It provided an area of seclusion and harsh terrain which conformed to lavriote ideals, whilst remaining, like Olympos, easily accessible from more populated areas. It was not so celebrated as Olympos in the eighth and ninth centuries, though there are references to monks from Latros in this period although the houses from which they came are un-

¹⁵ *ibid.*, p. 156.

¹⁶ Both fleetingly mentioned in a footnote by P. Peeters, 'Histoires monastiques géorgiennes', *AB* 26-27 (1917-8), p. 17, n. 2.

¹⁷ *Vie S. Luc. le Stylite (Life of St. Luke the Stylite)*, ed. P. Vanderstuyf, *PO* xi (1914) pp. 187-287, cf. p. 209.

¹⁸ *Life of St. Paul the Younger* c. 2, p. 22; c. 4, p. 24.

¹⁹ *Vitae of St. Iohannis atque Euthymii*, ed. P. Peeters, *AB* 26-27 (1917-19), 8-68, cf. p. 17-19. For Tornik, see T. Adontz, 'Tornik le Moine', *Byz* 13 (1938) 143-64.

²⁰ Janin, *Grands Centres*, pp. 217-240.

known.²¹ But there were certainly hermits on the mountain in the ninth century. The *Life of St. Paul of Latros*, composed c. 975, provides evidence for the existence of three houses: Kellibarôn, Christ the Saviour and Karyes. It is probable that there were considerably more monasteries in the area by this time, since the Chronicle of Theophanes *continuatus* reports that Romanos Lekapenos gave privileges to them.²² The Monastery of Karyes was almost certainly a coenobitic house, since the *Life of St. Paul* refers to it as 'large and highly populated' and relates that the saint was initially put to work in the kitchens.²³ It is significant that Paul's eremitic tendencies were discouraged here on the grounds of his youth. This would suggest that the main body of the monks and certainly the novices lived a communal life, whilst only a few older monks were allowed to withdraw from the coenobitic existence.²⁴

The other two monasteries mentioned in the *Life of Paul*, apart from the Stylos, were both *lavrae*. We hear of the saint visiting solitaries living at some distance from these houses but clearly attached to them. The Monastery of Stylos provides the first example in this period of a house combining the lavriote and coenobitic traditions. Paul, who initially lived as a hermit in a pinnacle of rock which he referred to as his *stylos*, was soon joined by disciples, some of whom lived communally, others in *kellia*.²⁵ The writer of the *Life of St. Paul* clearly indicates the existence of both types of monastic life: 'He (Paul) divided it wisely and well between those seeking to live alone and by themselves and those embracing the common existence of the spiritual flock'.²⁶ The only rule, uniting both groups, was that they should accept the

²¹ Isidore of Latros was one of the signatories of the Acts of the Council of Nicaea in 787 (Janin, *op. cit.*, p. 218) and about 863 a certain John of Latros assured the Empress Theodora's brother, Petronas, that he would be victorious over the Emir of Melitene. Although some art-historians, such as Oskar Wulff (in T. Wiegand, *Der Latmos* [Berlin 1913] pp. 190-228) have dated the frescoes in the so-called Pantocrator Cave on Latros to the seventh or eighth centuries, nothing precise is known of the monasteries there until the early tenth century.

²² *Theoph. cont.*, p. 430.

²³ *Life of St. Paul the Younger*, c. 6, p. 27; c. 7, p. 29. cf. Janin, *Grands centres*, pp. 232.

²⁴ *loc. cit.*, pp. 30-1.

²⁵ *ibid.*, c. 17, p. 52.

²⁶ *ibid.*

spiritual guidance of Paul himself. In fact, it is probable that Paul did not establish a series of regulations for the Stylos monastery; his own *Diathêkê* only comprised a series of moral precepts.²⁷

This hybrid style of monasticism was still being followed in the eleventh century. For St. Christodoulos, the founder of the Monastery of St. John on Patmos, describing the peaceful conditions on Latros before the coming of the Turks, relates that the monks of Stylos lived both the communal and the eremitic life, but that the coenobitic rules of poverty and common ownership curbed any excessive tendency to *idiorhythmia*.²⁸ But there are good reasons for supposing that the *eremia* enjoyed by the early monastic 'settlers' had ceased to exist by this time. The circumstances of St. Christodoulos' departure from Latros are by no means clear, but one of his stated reasons was the wish 'to go in search of an entirely eremitic and hesychastic life (and) communion alone with God, untroubled by the cares of life'.²⁹

This suggests that by the end of the eleventh century, the numerous flourishing monastic houses had ended the mountain's role as a 'desert'. But in the tenth century, Mount Latros, like Olympos, provided an area where coenobitic and kelliote monasteries existed side by side. As we shall see, the customs of Latros were taken to Patmos by Christodoulos in the late eleventh century.³⁰ There are, however, other parallels to be drawn in the tenth.

Across the River Maeander from Latros, above Priene, lay the mountain known to the Byzantines as Mykale or Barachios (the modern Samsun Dag).³¹ It was probably inhabited by monks from the late ninth century. Some indications of its fortunes may be gleaned from the tenth-century *Life of St. Nikêphoros*, once Bishop of Miletos and

²⁷ See S. P. Lampros, 'Diathêkê Paulou tou Latrênou', *NE* 12 (1915) 198-203, and G. Mercati, 'Falsa finale del Testamento di S. Paulo Latreno', *Studi e Testi* 79 (1937) 39-40, who shows that the 'end' of the Testament as printed by Lampros is, in fact, part of a sermon by Basil the Great.

²⁸ *Hypotypôsis of Christodoulos*, pp. 59-80.

²⁹ Christodoulos' explanation is quoted in a patriarchal document dealing with a dispute between Christodoulos and his monks of which we know little: *Hypomnêma* of Nicolas III Grammatikos, June 1087, *MM* 6, pp. 32-3 (Grumel, *Régestes* no. 94).

³⁰ See pp.

³¹ The identification of Barachios with Mykalê is made in the *Life of St. Paul the Younger*, c. 2, p. 22.

later a monastic founder in the area, and from the surviving sections of the cartulary of his monastery of Hiera-Xerochoraphion.³² Nikêphoros resigned his episcopal post and retired, firstly to Latros 'so that uninterruptedly and in solitude, he might converse with God'.³³ He found his way to the Monastery of the Stylos, where he was received by Symeon, Paul of Latros' successor in the hegoumenate.³⁴ He then moved to Mt. Mykale, and we are told in his biography of two houses there: Erebinthos and Hiera-Xerochoraphion. Before founding (or taking charge of) Erebinthos, St. Nikêphoros spent three years as a hermit living on the mountain. In doing so, he was exactly following the pattern of St. Paul of Latros: years of solitude, then the establishment of a permanent community. Both the Mykale houses thus probably allowed for the solitary and the communal life in the tenth century, but by the middle of the eleventh, Hiera-Xerochoraphion possessed considerable estates, requiring considerable monastic labour, and its inhabitants had risen from eighty to three hundred. The majority of monks, in these circumstances, must have lived the communal life.³⁵

The other most celebrated holy mountain of the tenth century was Kyminas, on the borders of Bithynia and Paphlagonia. Although it is mentioned in the list of holy mountains of 843, nothing more is known of the communities there until the early tenth century.³⁶ Again, details are supplied from the life of the most celebrated monastic founder, St. Michael Maleïnos.³⁷ He made his way to Kyminas from Constantinople in 912 and was presumably aware of the existence of holy men there before he set out, otherwise Olympos would have provided a closer de-

³² *Life of St. Nikêphoros*, pp. 129-166; see also N. Wilson, J. Darrouzès, 'Les restes du cartulaire de Hiéra-Xérochoraphion', *REB* 26 (1968) 5-47.

³³ *Life of St. Nikêphoros*, c. 14, p. 145.

³⁴ *loc. cit.*, A list of *hêgoumenoi* of the Stylos monastery (later known as the Monastery of St. Paul) is contained in a colophon to *Ms. paris gr. 590*. cf. H. Omont, 'Note sur un manuscrit grec copiée en 1050 au Mont Latros (Anatolie)', *Rev. des Etudes grecques* 1 (1888) 336-9.

³⁵ Wilson and Darrouzès, *loc. cit.*

³⁶ See n. 11 above.

³⁷ *Vie de S. Michael Maleïnos*, ed. L. Petit, *ROC* 7 (1902) 543-68 (Henceforward, *Life of St. Michael Maleïnos*).

stination for the type of life he wished to lead.³⁸ He received the monastic *schêma* from a holy man, John Elatites, in the village of Kersine at the foot of Mount Kymina. John was the *hêgoumenos* of a small lavriote monastery, of which Michael soon became *oikonomos* (steward) and to which he gave his share of property inherited from his father, so that it might be extended. His own way of life at the house conformed to lavriote custom. On Sundays he joined in worship with his brethren, but the remainder of the week he spent in seclusion on a rock.³⁹

Michael founded a house of his own at some time before 917.⁴⁰ Its church was dedicated to the Theotokos, but the house itself seems always to have been known as the lavra or *moné* of Maleînos. Although its regulations have been lost, there are a number of reasons for supposing that it was of the lavriote type. We are told in the biography of Maleînos that the saint transmitted to the brethren the 'laws of asceticism' and 'most harsh customs', which suggest a lavriote regime.⁴¹ St. Athanasios, the founder of the so-called Great Lavra on Mount Athos spent some time associated with the house and whilst there, lived a mile away from the *lavra* and was thus able 'to move onwards to a higher level of asceticism'.⁴² As in the case of Latros, where the customs may be 'retrospectively' suggested from those carried to Patmos by Christodoulos, the survival of the regulations laid down by Athanasios for the Lavra on Mt. Athos, and the very use of the word 'lavra' to describe the house, indicate that his monastic ideals were formed by his experience on Mt. Kyminas.⁴³

The last of the important monastic centres of western Asia Minor

³⁸ *op. cit.*, c. 6, p. 552. The date can be given with some precision because it was the sight of the funeral cortège of Leo VI (d. 912) which persuaded him to withdraw from the world.

³⁹ *op. cit.*, c. 6, pp. 552-3; c. 10, p. 556 for Michael's appointment as *diakonos tou trapezitou*; c. 11, pp. 557-8 for his donation of money.

⁴⁰ *op. cit.*, c. 15, p. 560; It was founded before the Bulgar attack 'in the reign of Zoe and Constantine' (the Byzantine defeat at Anchialos in 917) which Michael, already established in his foundation, predicted.

⁴¹ *Vie de Saint Athanase l'Athonite*, ed. L. Petit, AB, 25 (1906), pp. 5-89. This life, usually known as the *Life of Athanasios* (B), is derived from an older and fuller version, *Zhitie prepodobnago Afan-siya Afonskago*, ed. I. Pomyalovsky (St. Petersburg, 1895) referred to as *Life of Athanasios* (A).

⁴³ See p.

in the tenth and eleventh centuries was that of Mt. Galesion (Alaman dag), North of Ephesos.⁴⁴ There is no record of any monastic establishments in the region before the mid-eleventh century, when St. Lazaros, the most celebrated holy man of the area began his work there. A few hermits, are however, reported in his biography.⁴⁵ Apart from the houses which Lazaros himself founded: the monasteries of St. Marina (1005-12), the Sôter (1012-24), the Theotokos and the Anastasis,⁴⁶ there were other monasteries on the mountain at this time which may well have originated in the tenth century. Again, it is worth emphasising that the holy men of the period were not engaged in aimless wandering. They made for areas which already had a reputation for sanctity. It may be concluded, then, that the Monastery of the Theotokos at Bessai, which apparently housed three hundred monks in Lazaros' life time, and which already enjoyed considerable imperial favour, was founded before his arrival. Similarly, the Nunnery of Eupraxia, near the mountain, into which Lazaros' mother retired, probably dated from an earlier period.⁴⁷ Although a summary of Lazaros' *Testament* is included in his biography, it does not provide us with any precise information about the regime in the houses he founded. But the same lavriote influenced administration as on Olympos, Latros

⁴⁴ Janin, *Grands centres*, pp. 241-9.

⁴⁵ *Life of St. Lazaros*, c. 41, p. 522, a stylite at Petra overlooking the village of Galesion. *Loc. cit.* cc. 37-9, pp. 521-2; c. 62, p. 529, for the hermit, Paphnutios in a cavern, whose remains, by Lazaros' day, had been taken to Constantinople. The *Life* also contains a rare reference to a stylitess, *loc. cit.*, c. 59, p. 528.

⁴⁶ For St. Marina, at the foot of Mount Koumarôn, see *Life of St. Lazaros*, cc. 31-6 p. 519 and Janin, *Grands centres*, p. 242. For the Monastery of the Sôter, *Life of St. Lazaros*, cc. 42-3, pp. 552-3; c. 100, p. 539. Janin, *op. cit.*, p. 243; the Monastery of the Anastasis, *Life of St. Lazaros*, c. 162, p. 557; c. 246, p. 585, Janin *op. cit.*, p. 244; The Theotokos, *Life of St. Lazaros*, c. 64, p. 529, Janin, *op. cit.*, p. 244.

⁴⁷ For the Monastery at Bessai, see *Life of St. Lazaros*, cc. 238-9, p. 582, Janin, *op. cit.*, p. 244. Constantine Monomachos donated the land in memory of his mistress, Maria Skleraina (1042-4). She had made a donation of 720 *nomismata* for the construction of a church, possibly attached to this house. The Monastery of Bessai may be identified with the Monastery tôn Bessôn near Ataia mentioned in a chrysobull for the Nea Monê on Chios (*Zepos, I, Appendix, Doc. XIV*, pp. 637-8, Dölger, *Regesten*, no. 914. For the Nunnery of Eupraxia, see *Life of St. Lazaros*, c. 164, p. 558 and Janin, *op. cit.*, p. 244.

and Kyminas was probably practised there. Of the other 'holy mountains' of the area mentioned by chroniclers and hagiographers - St. Auxentios, Ida and Chryse Petra - little is known in the tenth and eleventh centuries and they played little part in the transmission of 'hybrid' monasticism.⁴⁸

The type of monasticism practised on the holy mountains of western Asia Minor was highly respected by contemporary Byzantines. Mount Olympos served as the consolidating point in the area for the new monastic style. From Olympos, this type of community of kelliotes and hermits passed to Latros, Mykale and Kyminas, a process made possible by the considerable mobility of some monks at this time. The most celebrated of the disciples of Michael Maleinos on Mt. Kyminas was Athanasios, the founder of the Lavra on Mt. Athos. The period spent by him in Asia Minor is well documented both by his biographers and in his own *Typikon*, as much an autobiographical memoir as a set of spiritual regulations.⁴⁹ It was he who was responsible for the spread of the specifically Bithynian type of monasticism to the holy mountain *par excellence* of the Byzantine state. Though their survival to the present day has given the history of the Athonite houses a perhaps undeserved prominence, as the evidence stands, Athos does provide the best documented example of the evolution of a holy mountain. As with the centres of Asia Minor, one must postulate the widespread fame of Athos before the arrival of Athanasios in c.958. The example of an earlier migrant, Euthymios the Younger, who left the Monastery of Pissadinôn on Olympos for Athos about 859, because he had 'heard of its tranquillity', as well as Genesios' reference for 843 can only confirm this view.⁵⁰ Athos in the ninth century was the abode of

⁴⁸ See J. Pargoire, 'Mont Saint-Auxence', *ROC* 8 (1903) 15-21; 24-79; 426-58; 550-76, who identified it with Kaich Dagh, 5 km. east of Chalcedon. It was the last but one of the imperial beacons running from the eastern frontier to Constantinople. Mount Ida, in the valley of the River Scamander, makes a brief appearance in the ninth-century *Acta graeca SS. Davidis, Symeonis et Georgii* AB 18 (1899) 209-59. Chryse Petra was clearly a well known monastic centre at the beginning of the tenth century. It was on the borders of Pontos Polemoniakos and Paphlagonia according to the author of the *Life of St. Nikôn Metanoites* ('Ho bios Nikônos tou Metanoite', *NE* 3 (1906) 129-228).

⁴⁹ *Typikon hētoi kanonikon tou hosiou kai theophorou patros hēmôn Athanasiou tou en tō Athō*, in P. Meyer, *Die Haupturkunden für die Geschichte der Athos - Klöster* (Leipzig 1894) pp. 102-22. (*Typikon of Athanasios*).

⁵⁰ See *Vie et Office de Saint Euthyme le Jeune*, ed. L. Petit, *Bib. Hag. Or.* V (Paris 1904) usefully

hermits and religious groups rather than of large houses. St. Euthymios the Younger lived a life of seclusion there before moving on to Thessalonika. St. Peter the Athonite, celebrated by a canon of Joseph the Hymnographer (d. 883-6) is described as living 'in *hesychia*', hidden amongst the mountains and grottoes.⁵¹ Two of the earliest known ascetics John Kolobos, who, by 865 was 'already advanced in spirituality' and the Monk Symeon (both associated with Euthymios the Younger) also led this type of life.⁵² The peninsula was a place where monks came to perform a spell of *hesychia* before returning to their monasteries. But there were some more permanent inhabitants. The earliest extant documents reveal that at the end of the ninth century, solitaries and monastic groups lived side by side on Athos, whilst to the north in the Khalkidiki, more permanent houses were being established. A *sigillion* of Basil I (June, 883) draws a distinction between them. In declaring that the religious communities were not to be troubled by the inroads of the flocks of their lay neighbours, it referred to the Athonites as 'those living outside the monasteries and those who have pitched their frugal tents there'.⁵³ The contrast between the houses outside Athos and the hermits there is also drawn in a chrysobull of Romanos I (August, 934).⁵⁴

The early evidence, then, reveals a pattern similar to the example of Bithynia - a mountain inhabited by hermits and small communities with, nearby, fertile land and more permanent establishments. It was probably as a consequence of the encroachments of the flocks of the monasteries beyond Athos onto the mountain that the hesychasts began to evolve a loose organisation of their own. By 908, an individual referred to as the *protos hesychastês* is found making a com-

summarised by D. Papachryssanthou, *Archives de l'Athos: VII, Actes du Prôtaton* (henceforward, *Prôtaton*), Paris 1975), pp. 22-31. See also her article, 'La vie de Saint Euthyme le Jeune et le métropole de Thessalonique', *REB* 32 (1974) 225-45.

⁵¹ For Peter the Athonite, see D. Papachryssanthou, 'L'Office ancien de Saint Pierre l'Athonite', *AB* 88 (1970) 27-41 and *ibid.*, 'La vie ancienne de Saint Pierre l'Athonite. Date composition et valeur historique', *AB* 92 (1974) 19-61. For Joseph the Hymnographer, see L. Stiernon, 'La vie et l'oeuvre de S. Joseph l'Hymnographe', *REB* 21 (1973) 243-66.

⁵² See *Prôtaton*, pp. 29-31 for Euthymios' disciples.

⁵³ *Prôtaton*, no. 1 (883) and *Introduction*, p. 33.

⁵⁴ *Prôtaton*, no. 3 (934).

plaint about these incursions to Constantinople.⁵⁵ The concern of the hermits for the preservation of their solitude was brought to a head by the establishment of coenobitic monasteries on the mountain itself, a stage corresponding to eighth and ninth century developments on Olympos. The earliest mentioned, the Monastery *tou Athonos*, first appears in an agreement of 942.⁵⁶ Its foundation was probably the cause of the protests of 908. Three other monasteries, those of Clement, Xeropotamou (St. Nikêphoros) and Bouleuteria were all in existence by the mid-tenth century.⁵⁷ By 970-2, when fifty-seven *hêgoumenoi* signed the regulatory document (known as the *Tragos*, or 'goat', because it was written on goat-skin parchment) drawn up on the orders of the Emperor John Tzimiskes, it is clear that large numbers of the monks of Athos were now grouped in *koinobia*.⁵⁸

The change in monastic emphasis may be closely associated with the arrival of Athanasios and the establishment and early success of the Great Lavra. But, in addition, the more peaceful conditions prevailing in the later tenth century in Thrace and the hinterland of Athos allowed greater numbers to come to the mountain, numbers which could not be absorbed by previous eremitic customs. The *Tragos* effectively put an end to the period of individual *askêsis* on the mountain, for it decreed that 'those who come to Athos to take up the monastic life should be received inside monasteries and are not to stay outside the holy enclosures' and, further, that the *hêgoumenoi* alone were to de-

⁵⁵ *Prôtaton*, n. 2 (908).

⁵⁶ *Prôtaton*, no. 4 (942). The distinction between the early references to the *mountain* of Athos and the *Monastery* of Athos is established by Papachryssanthou, *loc. cit.*, pp. 61-4.

⁵⁷ For the Monastery of Clement, see *Prôtaton*, p. 64. It was the first house on Athos to be inhabited by Georgian monks. The convoluted history of the two monasteries of Xeropotamou was elucidated by S. Binon, *Les Origines légendaires et l'histoire de Xéropotamou et de Saint-Paul* (Louvain 1942), but see now J. Bompaire, ed. *Archives de l'Athos III: Actes de Xéropotamou* (Paris 1964) pp. 4-8, and Papachryssanthou, *Prôtaton*, pp. 65-9. For Bouleuteria, see *Prôtaton*, pp. 68-9.

⁵⁸ For the *Tragos*, see *Prôtaton*, no. 7, pp. 202-15. See pp. 95-102 for an analysis of its significance. It is impossible to come to firm conclusions about the date. D. Anastasievic, 'La date du typicon de Tzimiskès pour le Mont Athos' *Byz 4* (1927-8) 7-11 suggests 970. It must have been issued before the summer of 972 when Tzimiskes went on campaign to Mesopotamia. Papachryssanthou suggests two possibilities, Jan. 970- April 971, or Aug. 971 - summer 972. For the epithet '*tragos*', see F. Dölger, 'Die Echtheit des *Tragos*', in *Byzantinische Diplomatie*, (Ettal 1956) pp. 215-24.

cide the suitable candidates for hesychasm in each monastery.⁵⁹ The history of Athos in the tenth century is thus the history of the rise of the communal religious life at the expense of the individual religious experience. This development is all the more ironic, since the declared intention in coming to Athos of Athanasios, the man chiefly responsible, was to seek peace and solitude.

As we have seen, Athanasios spent some time on Mount Kyminas before he came to Athos. After living disguised as a hermit, Barnabos, on the southern tip of the peninsula, he abandoned the solitary life in favour of founding a communal house, in which he hoped later to be joined by Nikêphoros Phokas, the future emperor.⁶⁰ It was a considerable change of spiritual and emotional direction which could only have been contemplated because Athanasios had *already* had experience, on Mount Kyminas, of a way of life which combined the elements of the *koinobion* with opportunities for individual *hêsychia*. The use of the word *lavra* to describe the foundation is a crucial indication of the way Athanasios' mind was working.

The *Typikon* of Athanasios gives a detailed account of the construction of the *lavra* and it is from the architectural detail provided in the document, as much as from its monastic constitutions that his intentions may be established. The first building was a *hêsychastêrion* intended for Nikêphoros Phokas, at this time still expected to join the community. Then followed an Oratory to St. John Prodromos and Churches dedicated to the Theotokos, the Forty Martyrs of Amorion and St. Nicholas Thaumaturgos. Next we hear of *kellia* being built on a square around the Church of the Theotokos, a refectory with twenty marble tables; a *nosokomeion* (infirmary) a *xenodocheion* (hostel for visitors); bath houses for the use of the sick; irrigation works and water mills and further *hêsychasteria* and *kellia* in the *lavra*'s dependent houses.⁶¹ Athanasios was here enumerating all the architectural work which took place during his life time in one account, and we cannot establish the time-scale from it. But the type of establishment emerging in the forty years before Athanasios' death is quite clear. Although the

⁵⁹ *Tragos*, II. 45-53; 72-4.

⁶⁰ *Life of Athanasios* (B), c. 13, p. 24, for Athanasios' life as a hermit.

⁶¹ *Typikon of Athanasios*, c. 23, p. 33; c. 25, pp. 34-6.

house was termed a *lavra*, provisions were made for communal eating and charitable work. Although it might appear coenobitic, provision was made from the first for the practice of the solitary life, both within the walls of the monastery and outside it.

The mixed form of monasticism brought by Athanasios from Mount Kyminas to Athos proved extremely attractive to his contemporaries. The history of the endowments and political influence of the houses on Athos based on the Lavra's pattern is evidence of the approval shown by many Byzantine patrons of a style of monasticism which combined those virtues preached by St. Basil, with the possibility for the individual to demonstrate a higher spirituality. With the coming of Athanasios, the religious communities on Athos took on a new aspect. No longer could the mountain be considered as a suitable *êremia* for solitaries, and although a few small houses survived into the eleventh century, they were eventually absorbed by the Lavra and its emulators.

The process of transformation of areas sought out for their solitude into flourishing monastic communities can also be illustrated from the development of the island monasteries of the Aegean founded by monks from the holy mountains of Bithynia. For just as Athanasios' foundation on Athos reveals close parallels with the Lavra of Maleinos on Mount Kyminas, so, too, may the early experience of St. Christodoulos as *hêgoumenos* of the Monastery of the Stylos on Mount Latros be shown to have had an important influence on the constitutions of his foundation of St. John the Theologian on Patmos.⁶² Whatever the reasons for Christodoulos' sudden departure from Latros in 1079, his stated wish was for the kind of solitude sought after by the monastic founders of the tenth century.⁶³ This desire is illustrated by his settlement for a time near Kastrianon on Mount Pelion, on the Island of Kos. This was the highest and most rugged part of the island

⁶² See E. Vranousses, *Ta Hagiologika keimena tou hosiou Christodoulou* (Athens 1966).

⁶³ *Hypotyposis of Christodoulos*, pp. 61-2. The unusual circumstance of Christodoulos' resignation from the post of *hêgoumenos* of the Stylos Monastery after only eleven years and the fragmentary references in patriarchal documents to accusations against Christodoulos by his monks must lead one to suppose that his position there was not happy. See *MM*, vi, p. 31 for a series of references to patriarchal action on complaints about Christodoulos.

‘for it was surrounded by ravines, with valleys all around, a citadel as it were... (for) I wished to stand aside from the affairs of the multitude and enjoy the hesychast life until my death’.⁶⁴

Kos provides an example of an embryonic monastic community on the Bithynian pattern-houses or individual *kellia*, situated in deliberately chosen remote areas. But its peaks never developed into celebrated holy mountains, mainly, one suspects because of the departure of Christodoulos for Patmos. His reason was, once again, the intrusion of the affairs of the world into his monastic solitude. It was an intrusion he had brought upon himself, by accepting the assistance of the gifts of the faithful of the island whilst building his monastery.⁶⁵ Friendships began to be formed between his monks and their lay neighbours, a state of affairs which, in his account of these events in his *Hypotypôsis*, prompted Christodoulos to make an interesting ‘policy statement’: ‘You will not be able to achieve solitude (*êremos*) unless you find a place from which the laity has been completely removed; a place of *hêsychia* for yourself and your brethren which can contribute to the work of the spirit’.⁶⁶ There is an indication here of a distinct change in emphasis in the search for *êremia*. Christodoulos was not prepared to withdraw from the world himself; the world had to be excluded. The difficulty was clear. A geographical context in which monks might be self-sufficient without relying on the donations of the laity was almost certainly an environment in which some sort of lay settlement already existed, or in which monastic manpower would not prove adequate for survival.⁶⁷

Such was the case on Patmos, initially chosen by Christodoulos for its tranquillity and the fact that it was unfrequented by shipping - an island equivalent of the seclusion of the mountains of Asia Minor.⁶⁷ The customs of the Monastery of St. John the Theologian, established by Christodoulos, clearly place it amongst houses practising both the coenobitic and lavriote way of life. Its constitutions were very similar

⁶⁴ *Hypotypôsis*, pp. 63.

⁶⁵ *loc. cit.*, pp. 63-4.

⁶⁶ *ibid.*

⁶⁷ A problem foreseen by the Emperor Alexios Komnênos, cf. *Hypotypôsis*, p. 65, which led ultimately to the admission of workers and their families to the island.

⁶⁸ *Hypotypôsis*, p. 64.

to those of the Lavra on Mount Athos, though, curiously, no mention of Patmos appears in the published documents of Athos, and *vice versa*. The house was basically coenobitic and Christodoulos followed St. Basil in his approval of the common life: 'Those who have truly striven after the life of the angels are the ascetics who have lived the common life through great difficulties, showing in their communal existence a pure *mimêsis* of the angelic state'.⁶⁹ But Christodoulos also provided rules for those pursuing the hesychastic life-twelve in all. He remarked himself that he did not wish this goal to be thought unattainable. This last statement is sure proof that the opportunities for individual spiritual achievement provided by the *lavrae* had now become so accepted into the 'mainstream' of coenobitic practice that it would have been out of the question to exclude them. The hesychasts were to live alone for five days each week, then to meet to celebrate the Sabbath-eve and the Sunday liturgy with their brethren - a pattern familiar from the monasteries of western Asia Minor.⁷⁰

Athos and Patmos provide two examples of monastic developments which may firmly be linked with the traditions of Bithynia. In a few other houses, too, these practices may also be glimpsed. One of the imperial chrysobulls granted to the *Nea Monê* on Chios (June, 1045) expressed the concern of the Emperor, Constantine Monomachos to preserve the seclusion of the monks. He freed from the attentions of the imperial fisc (*demosion*) 'those who live a life near to God and according to their ability, follow the way and existence of the angels so that they may have solitude and joy in all things'.⁷¹ Indeed, there may well have been direct links between Chios and the holy mountain of Olympos.⁷²

Mention should also be made of two obscure holy mountains outside Asia Minor. Mount Ganos, on the Thracian coast of the Sea of

⁶⁹ *ibid.*, p. 69.

⁷⁰ *ibid.*, p. 76.

⁷¹ *Chrysoboullas logos* of Constantine IX Monomachos, *Zepos*, I, *Appendix*, Doc. VII, pp. 629-31 (Dölger, *Regesten*, no. 868) p. 629.

⁷² Two further chrysobulls of Constantine Monomachos granted the monks a *xenodocheion* in Constantinople to be used by monks visiting the capital on business. It was shared by monks from Olympos. cf. *Zepos*, *loc. cit.*, pp. 631-2; 632

Marmara, first mentioned in the tenth century, and the so-called 'Mountain of the Kellia of Zagora' (modern-day Mount Pelion in Thessaly) both seem to have supported hybrid monasticism.⁷³ Thus the spiritual influence of the monastic houses of Asia Minor can clearly be traced in the development of that association of the solitary and the communal life which became common in the new foundations in Athos, the Aegean islands and Greece. The method of transmission of these ideas was by the example and teaching of individuals themselves trained to appreciate the differing, though in their eyes compatible, virtues of personal spiritual achievement and joint endeavour. The consequences of this development were considerable. Firstly, the necessity of discovering a physical environment in which individual *hēsychia* might be achieved led to a deliberate 'colonisation' of hitherto desolate or abandoned areas of the Empire and provided them with a stimulus for economic growth. Secondly, as a consequence of the popularity of this type of monasticism, large numbers joined houses in which it was practised. They were thus transformed, by sheer force of numbers, into institutions which played a dominant economic and social role in the areas in which they were situated.

The growth of the mixed form of monasticism was a new departure in religious life in the tenth and eleventh centuries, but it was by no means the only regimen followed. Houses devoted to the communal life maintained their appeal and increased their numbers. The *typika* (foundation documents) of five of such houses, all dating from the eleventh century, still survive, and provide evidence for the continuation of 'undiluted' coenobitic monasticism. Not surprisingly, the surviving documents mainly come from the regions around Constantinople and the northern Balkans which escaped the worse of the Turkish raiding. The *typika* of the Monasteries of the Theotokos *tēs Evergetidos* near Constantinople (c. 1054); the Theotokos *tēs Petrit-*

⁷³ For Mount Ganos, see *Chronicle of the Logothete*, p. 615; The location of the 'Mountain of the Kellia' was established by Vranousses, *loc. cit.*, pp. 128-9. Christodoulos mentions in his *Hypotypōsis* (p. 64) that he was asked by the Emperor, Alexios Komnēnos, to become Protos of the community, in order to reform the ways of the monks. One of his biographers declares that he drew up regulations for them although he never joined the community; John of Rhodes, *Bios kai politeia tou hosiou patros hemōn Christodoulou*, in K. Boīnes, *Akolouthia hiera tou hosiou kai theophorou patros hemōn Christodoulou*, 3rd. ed (Athens 1884) p. 123.

zonitissês at Bačkovo (in present day Bulgaria, founded 1083); the Theotokos *tês Eleousês* at Stroumnitza in Thrace (1085-1106); the Nunnery of the Theotokos *tês Kecharitômenês* at Constantinople (founded by the Empress Irene Doukaina c. 1113) and the charitable institutions run on monastic lines founded by Michael Attaleiates at Rhaidesto and Constantinople (1077), all provide detailed regulations for the running of coenobitic houses.⁷⁴ But they also contain the opinions of their founders on the positive merits of the strictly communal life. They all believed that the spiritual benefit of the monastic life could never be achieved if the coenobitic style were not strictly followed. This was characterised by a common spiritual and physical life which was aimed at the achievement of *askêsis* by the subordination of the individual's desires and aspirations to the common will of the brotherhood. The emphasis in these documents on 'obedience' (*hypotagê*) marked a fundamental difference between their spirituality and that of the lavriotes.⁷⁵ The individual will was to be subordinated by the imposition of uniformity in dress, in diet, in labour (whether spiritual or manual) and in limitations on the freedom of movement. In each of these areas, a contrast may be drawn with the customs of the lavriotes, which allowed, amongst other things, the wearing of skins and mortificatory chains and solitary working, eating and prayer.⁷⁶ The founders of *lavrae* adjudicated from a distance on the affairs of their houses and the surrounding countryside, whereas the

⁷⁴ For the *Typikon of the Evergetis Monastery*, see A. Dmitrievsky, *Opisanie liturgiceskih rukopisej hranjascijsja v bibliotekah pravoslavnago vostoka*, i, *Typika* (Kiev 1895) pp. 615-55; *Typikon of Bačkovo*: L. Petit, 'Le typikon de Grégoire Pacourianos', *VV, Prilozhenie*, i (1904) 1-57 is more easily obtainable than the recent Soviet edition. *Typikon of Stroumnitza*: L. Petit, 'Le monastère de Notre Dame de Pitié en Macédoine', *IRAIK* 6 (1900) 1-153; *Nunnery tês Kecharitômenês*: *MM*, V, pp. 327-89. *Typikon of Attaleiates*: *MM*, V, pp. 293-327.

⁷⁵ For the emphasis on obedience (*hypotagê*). See *Typikon of Attaleiates*, p. 312; *Typikon of Evergetis*, pp. 636-7; *Typikon of Kecharitômenê*, p. 368.

⁷⁶ See *Typikon of Stroumnitza*, c. 9, p. 77-9 and Commentary, *loc. cit.*, pp. 106-9 for discussion of the theological significance of each item of monastic garb. Only the *Typikon of Attaleiates* (pp. 315-6) allowed for any difference in diet between *hêgoumenos* and monks; in all the others the value of the common table was emphasised. *Stroumnitza*, pp. 72; 76; *Evergetis*, pp. 624-7; 642-3; *Bačkovo*, pp. 15-6; 24-5. For the clothes of the holy men, see *Life of St. Luke the Stylite*, p. 203 (skins and heavy chains) and *Life of St. Lazaros*, c. 35, p. 520 (hair shirt).

hégoumenoi of these eleventh-century *koinobia* were actively concerned in the affairs of their monasteries. For them, the highest pinnacle of spiritual achievement was *not* to be seen in a solitary life outside the community. On the contrary, the detail with which the liturgical duties of the monks were laid down emphasised the stress which their founders placed on the united and orderly life, whose chief purpose was to intercede with the deity.⁷⁷

The lists of monastic officials found in these *typika-ekklésiarches*, *dochiarioi*, *skeuophylakes*, cooks, cellarers and so on indicate highly structured communities in which each had his own task.⁷⁸ These offices also existed in the *lavrae*, but the same insistence on the humble and cheerful performance of every task, however menial, is not found in monastic *typika*. The *Typikon of the Evergetis Monastery* exhorted the monks to carry out their work with the thought 'I have not come to command, but be commanded'.⁷⁹ Pakourianos put it somewhat more succinctly when he declared that the monks should work with their hands, but have a psalm on their lips.⁸⁰ Labour was seen as a positive manifestation of spirituality, not, as in the *lavrae*, a necessary task to be performed before the more important spiritual exercise of prayer. Similarly, although the *lavrae* opened their doors to strangers and the needy, charitable work was undertaken on a much larger scale by the *koinobia*. Michael Attaleiates' houses were specifically founded for charitable purposes; Pakourianos made provisions for refugees on the estates of Bačkovó.⁸¹ The unity of the *koinobion* was, finally, also emphasised by the prohibition on its monks to leave their house. The *Typikon of the Evergetis Monastery*, for example, forbade its monks to venture to Constantinople, unless they had been specifically summoned by the Emperor or the Patriarch 'for some attack or campaign' - presumably to act as military chaplains.⁸² This prohibition was emphasised by other founders of *koinobia* and was in keeping with the ac-

⁷⁷ *Typikon of Attaleiates*, p. 302 for liturgical offices. See also *Stroumnitza*, pp. 73-5 and *Commentary*, pp. 105-6; *Evergetis*, pp. 617; 620-1; *Bačkovó*, p. 22.

⁷⁸ See, for example, *Bačkovó*, pp. 21-3.

⁷⁹ *Evergetis*, p. 645.

⁸⁰ *Bačkovó*, p. 31.

⁸¹ *Typikon of Attaleiates*, *passim*; *Bačkovó*, pp. 48-9.

⁸² *Evergetis*, p. 632.

cepted teachings of the Councils of the Church.⁸³ It was in great contrast, however, to the practices of the lavriote founders. As we have seen, Paul of Latros, Lazaros of Mount Galesion and Christodoulos of Patmos all spent their early years wandering from place to place.

But perhaps the most important variation in spiritual orientation was the lack of charismatic founding figures in the *koinobia*. None of the founders of the eleventh century houses gave their own names to their establishments. Indeed, most seem to have been dedicated to the Mother of God. Their memory was venerated with due gratitude in the diptychs, but they were only rarely (as in the case of St. Cyril of Philea, who founded the Monastery of the Sôter at Derkos in Thrace about 1050) later considered as saints.⁸⁴ In many cases, they remained in the world until, probably, just before their death. As a consequence monks followed the spiritual counsel of their *hêgoumenos* alone and were subject to stern strictures against travelling to follow other spiritual leaders - two freedoms essential to the success of the lavriote life.⁸⁵

At all levels, then, the founders of the coenobitic houses made it clear that they wished the communal life to be followed without alteration. They represented, in many cases, the adherents to traditional modes of piety, a conservative group to be contrasted with the innovative founders of the *lavrae* in both the social and the spiritual sense. They believed in a strict adherence to the teachings of the Fathers of the Church of the past, not to the example of the spiritual athletes of their own times:

For thy [the Fathers of the Church] were well aware and indeed, firmly laid down, that the

⁸³ E. Herman, 'La «stabilitas loci» nel monachismo bizantino', *OrChPer*, xxi (1955), pp. 115-42 discusses this question.

⁸⁴ Veneration of the memory of founders: *Evergetis*, p. 358; *Bačkovo*, pp. 23-4; 40-3; *Kecharitoménê*, pp. 646-7; *Attaleiates*, p. 315. For St. Cyril, see *Vie de S. Cyrille de Philéote par Nicholas Katasképenos*, ed. E. Sargologos, (*Subs. Hag.*, Brussels 1964). Henceforward, *Life of St. Cyril Philéotes*.

⁸⁵ For the *hêgoumenos* as the koinobion's 'spiritual father', see *Evergetis*, pp. 636-8; *Bačkovo*, pp. 30-1; *Kecharitoménê*, p. 343, where the *hegoumenê* is referred to as 'spiritual mother'. The nuns were also provided with a male *pneumatikos patér*. (*loc. cit.*, p. 346). Prohibition on movement in, for example, *Bačkovo*, p. 32.

communal life should be undertaken and that those fleeing from the storms of the world and seeking the peaceful haven of the monastic life, should be torn aside from their own desires and should devote themselves to submission. They are in need of a helmsman and guide, for the eyes of their souls are blind and they are not able to help themselves.⁸⁶

No saints appeared from the *koinobia*, but the original ideals of monasticism were perhaps better fulfilled.

The final group of monks to play an important part in the spiritual life of tenth and eleventh-century Byzantium, was comprised of individuals whose careers did not *primarily* involve the founding or running of religious houses, but who chiefly spent their lives in three important activities: preaching, healing and prophecy. They were usually peripatetic and played a major part in bringing spiritual guidance, communal leadership and often the Gospel itself to areas outside the reach of the monasteries and *Iavrae*. We hear of saints involved in large-scale preaching activities in areas in which the Christian life had been disrupted by invasion. Two areas in particular - Greece and Crete - produced a series of major figures. In Greece, the threat came from the Bulgar raids of the early and last years of the tenth century, which severely disrupted rural life. In Crete, the challenge to the Church was to re-establish Christianity after the Byzantine re-conquest of the island from the Muslims in 961.⁸⁷

One of the most striking aspects of the careers of the monks who undertook this work was the immense distances they covered. St. Luke the Younger (896-953), spent his childhood near Delphi, then travelled through the Peloponnese, staying at Mount Joannitza (Mt. Bardos, near Corinth), at Corinth itself, Zemena (again near the city), Joannitza again, Kalamion (the antique site of Boulis, east of Ancyra) and the Isle of Ampolôn before returning to his native Phocis to die near Stiris.⁸⁸ St. John Xenos, a contemporary of the Patriarch Alexios

⁸⁶ *Kecharitoméné*, p. 333.

⁸⁷ A concerted effort seems to have been made in Crete in this period, if the existence of a collection of Lives of ninety-nine saints is anything to go by: N. Basilakes, *Akolouthia tôn enenêkonta enneahosiôn kai theophorôn tôn en Krêtê askesantôn* (Heraklion 1879).

⁸⁸ The complete *Life of St. Luke Steiriôtes* was first pub. by G. Kremos, *Phokika* (Athens 1974). It is

Studites (1025-43), travelled through western Crete setting up small oratories (*eukteria*) often with only one monk, as 'relay-stations' in the re-Christianisation of the island.⁸⁹ He may have confined his activity to this area because the groundwork of preaching had already been laid in the central and eastern regions by St. Nikôn 'Metanoite', who had issued his call to the island's population to repent of their lapses into 'idolatry' (Islam) shortly after 961.⁹⁰ Nikôn then went on to Greece and concentrated his evangelism in the Peloponnese, where the Slavonic element not only showed hostility to the Christian religion, but also contributed to the atmosphere of uncertainty and fear which demanded the services of experienced clergy.

Perhaps the most admired quality common to all these wandering holy men was the gift of prophecy. We must of course assume that the accounts of prediction which are contained in hagiographies were written after the events concerned, and may have strong doubts about their strict truthfulness, but there is no doubt that Byzantines of the period *did* believe that certain of those who were near to God were also granted glimpses into His schemes for the future. According to his biographer, St. Luke the Younger predicted the Bulgar attack of 917 and later barbarian invasions, probably those of the Magyars in 934.⁹¹ He was treated as a prophet and none of the inhabitants of the area around Mount Joannitza would leave their homes until he gave the signal of approaching attack.⁹² St. Nikôn, it was said, predicted that the *stratêgos* of the Peloponnese, Basil Apokaukos, would turn back the barbarians - a reference to the Bulgar attack of 996 under Tsar Samuel.⁹³ St. Peter of Argos had a vision of St. John the Baptist warn-

difficult to obtain, and for this reason refs. are to two older eds. which together supply a complete text: Conbefis'ed. in *PG* 111 cols. 441-80 (henceforward *PG*) and E. Martini, 'Supplementa ad acta S. Lucae junioris', *AB* 13 (1894) 81-121 (Henceforward, *M*).

⁸⁹ 'Le Testament de Jean l'Étranger', ed. H. Delehaye, *Mém. de l'Acad. Roy de Belgique. Classe des lettres*, xiii (1921), Appendix, pp. 188-96. The place-names were identified as Cretan by L. Petit, 'St. Jean Xénos ou l'Érmitte d'après son autobiographie', *AB* 42 (1924) 5-20.

⁹⁰ See E. Voulgarakis, 'Nikon Metanoiete und die Rechristianisierung der Kreter vom Islam' *Zeitschrift für Missionswissenschaft und Religionswissenschaft* 417 (1963) 192-269.

⁹¹ *Life of St. Luke Steiriôtes*, (*PG*) col. 94; (*M*), p. 104.

⁹² *op. cit.*, (*M*), p. 107.

⁹³ *Life of St. Nikôn*, p. 175. For the career of Basil Apokaukos, see A. Bon, *Le Peloponnèse byzantin*

ing him of the disruption in the Peloponnese which would follow the death of the Patriarch Theophylact.⁹⁴ The predictions of the saints of tenth-century southern Greece were in keeping with the concerns uppermost in the minds of the people amongst whom they lived. The chief of these was the fear of invasion or raid, but other more personal troubles were brought to the holy men. Luke the Younger directed two brothers to the site of their father's buried treasure in order to end a family feud; he identified the thief of a large sum of gold stolen from an imperial official in Corinth *en route* for Africa.⁹⁵ St. Nikôn created a spring for the inhabitants of Môron (Peloponnese) at a time of drought and freed Sparta of plague by the simple expedient of expelling the Jewish community. Peter of Argos acted as a negotiator with Cretan muslim pirates at Nauplia (c. 930) in order to ransom Christian captives.⁹⁶ In this way, then, the holy men of tenth-century Greece were acting according to long held spiritual habits, moving from community to community 'standing' (as Peter Brown has put it in the context of the late antique countryside) 'outside the ties of family and economic unity' and adding an element of security in a world which was, for some, just as dangerous in the tenth century as it had been in the fourth and fifth.⁹⁷

The quality of 'seperateness' was emphasised by the movement of these monks from place to place and was, in some cases, accentuated by their refusal to reveal their origins. The most celebrated example in this period was probably that of St. Basil the Younger whose continued refusal to reveal either his place of birth or his parentage led to his questioning and torture by the *parakaimômenos* Samonas in Constantinople. The only reply that Basil would give to repeated questioning was a phrase from the Epistle to the Hebrews:

jusqu'en 1204 (Paris, 1951), p. 186, n. 3.

⁹⁴ *Life of St. Peter of Argos: Vita et conversatio S. Patris Nostri Petri episcopi Argivorum*, ed. A. Mai, *Novum Patrum Bibliothecae*, 10 vols. (Rome 1852-1905), IX, iii, pp. 1-17, cf. c. 19, p. 13. For the dating of this episode, probably between (924 and 927, see A. A. Vasiliev, 'The Life of St. Peter of Argos and its Historical Significance', *Traditio* 5 (1947) 163-90.

⁹⁵ *Life of St. Luke Steiriôtes*, (M), p. 95; (M), pp. 99-100.

⁹⁶ *Life of St. Peter of Argos*, c. 14, p. 10.

⁹⁷ See P. R. L. Brown, 'The Rise and Function of the Holy Man in Late Antiquity', *JRS* lxi (1971), pp. 80-101, cf. p. 91.

For I am stranger (*xenos*) and one
of those that dwell under the earth.⁹⁸

Even in more friendly company, he contented himself with the phrase
Where I come from it is not necessary for you to know
What I shall be afterwards, ye shall hear.⁹⁹

The same idea of the lack of attachment to one particular place is briefly developed in the short and unpolished *Testament of John Xenos*. The word *xenos* is here used not as a family name, but to describe John's way of life, which he himself describes, 'I wandered from mountain to mountain, seeking deserted places'.¹⁰⁰ The *xenos* figures, though far more common in the early Byzantine period, still retained the admiration of Byzantines of the tenth and eleventh centuries. This admiration was summed up by Nicholas Kataskêpenos, the biographer of St. Cyril Phileôtes when describing his subject's hardships during a pilgrimage to Rome: 'He was a *xenos*, a man who gives up his home for God and forces himself to live abroad'.¹⁰¹

In their lifetimes, these rather mysterious figures gained popularity precisely because they 'stood outside the ties of family', but this independent position was ended by the existence of the houses which they founded. In John Xenos' case, the small hermitages, originally containing only one monk each, were gathered together at the end of his life into one entity, complete with patriarchal documents of confirmation.¹⁰² Their property seems to have been extensive and probably formed the basis for later expansion. Basil the Younger founded no house during his life time, but on his death, his body was buried in a monastery between the Church of SS. Florus and Lausus and that of St. Philip in Constantinople after his disciples had scotched a plan by

⁹⁸ *Epistle to the Hebrews*, xi, 38. The fullest version of the *Life of St. Basil the Younger* is provided by two virtually unobtainable Russian eds. A.N. Vselovskij, in *Sbornik Otdelenija Russkago Jazyka... Imp. Akad. Nauk.*, 46 (1889-90); *Suppl.* pp. 3-89; 53 (1891-2). *Suppl.*, pp. 3-174 and S.G. Vilinskij, *Žitie sv. Vassiliya Novago v Russkoj Literature. Zapiskie Imp. Novorussijskago universiteta*, 7 (Odessa, 1911) p. 5-142. I refer here, *faute de mieux*, to the ed. in *AS Mar.* iii, pp. 20-32 (Greek Text), see cc. 3-7, pp. 20ff.

⁹⁹ *loc. cit.*, c. 8, p. 21.

¹⁰⁰ *Testament of St. John Xenos*, p. 191.

¹⁰¹ *Life of St. Cyril Phileôtes*, c. 20, p. 327.

¹⁰² *Testament of St. John Xenos*, pp. 192; 193; 195. For the chrysobulls, p. 194.

his erstwhile patron, Constantine Barbaros, to remove the saint's remains to a church on his own estate outside the City.¹⁰³

In the cases of SS. Luke the Younger, Peter of Argos and Nikôn, the transience they had enjoyed in life was ended after death by the construction of oratories and shrines on the sites of their graves.¹⁰⁴ Unlike the charismatic founders of the *lavrae*, the initial sphere of influence of these saints was local, although Peter of Argos, Nikôn 'Metanoite' and Luke the Younger appear in the *Synaxiary of Constantinople* - an indication of their eventual wide appeal.¹⁰⁵ In Nikôn's case, his biographer indicates that he was primarily a holy man for the people of Sparta: 'He protected them from all evil on sea and land'.¹⁰⁶ Peter of Argos was, and is, the particular patron of that city.¹⁰⁷ Though the saints had disciples, their main efforts were devoted towards the concerns of the surrounding laity. Rather than attracting large numbers of followers into the localities where they worked, they were themselves later 'exported' to other regions after death - a process which was made possible by their initial lack of a permanent, territorial establishment. The popularity of these monk-saints reflected their success in achieving the old-fashioned goals of the holy men of the past, centring on the quality of apartness.

One other group of non-founding monks - the stylites - practised these qualities to an even greater extent.¹⁰⁸ It would be tempting to correlate the decline in the stylite population of the Empire with the rise in the number of monastic foundations headed by charismatic figures, but there is no close relationship between these two factors. The

¹⁰³ *Life of St. Basil the Younger*, cc. 54; 55, pp. 37-8. The Monastery was situated in the western part of the city, in the region known as *ta Meltiadou*. See R. Janin, *Constantinople byzantine* (Paris 1950) p. 361.

¹⁰⁴ *Life of St. Luke Steiriôtes*, c. 69, p. 475; *Life of St. Nikôn*, c. 53, p. 179.

¹⁰⁵ *Synaxarium ecclesiae Constantinopolitanae*, ed. H. Delehaye, *Propylaeum ad Acta Sanctorum novembris* (Brussels 1902) Nov. 26, p. 260 (Nikôn); Feb. 7, p. 449; Feb. 8 p. 453 (Luke the Younger); May 2, p. 649, May 3, p. 652 (Peter of Argos).

¹⁰⁶ *Life of St. Nikôn*, c. 82, p. 217.

¹⁰⁷ See S. Papaoikonomos, *O Poliouchos tou Argous Hagios Petros Episkopos Argous o Thaumaturgos* (Athens 1908) esp. plates showing the processions for the saint.

¹⁰⁸ H. Delehaye, *Les saints Stylites* (*Subs. Hag.* xiv [Brussels 1923 rep. 1962]) remains the only survey.

mentions of stylites in the hagiographical literature of the tenth and eleventh centuries do, however, become sparser. Only one full-length biography of a stylite, that of St. Luke of Chalcedon seems to exist for this period, though there are fleeting glimpses of them in other sources. St. Luke the Younger served a stylite at Zemena near Patras for ten years (c. 916-26),¹⁰⁹ St. Lazaros of Mount Galesion came across a stylite on the mountain and heard of a female counterpart. His companion on the return journey from Jerusalem (c. 1009), the monk Paul, remained behind at Laodicea in Syria to become a stylite.¹¹⁰

The *Life of St. Luke the Stylite* (879-979) was probably written between 979 and 1000 and possibly before 986.¹¹¹ It thus provides a portrait by a contemporary of the life of a tenth century stylite. Luke's first column was built on his own estate in the Anatolikon theme.¹¹² His second, more celebrated pillar was at Hiera, near Chalcedon. It was built in the form of a tower with a platform on top, supporting a small shelter. It probably had a balustrade, since we hear of five bronze crosses around the top, from which the lightning flashed during storms.¹¹³ It is possible that the stylite represented in the *de luxe* manuscript of the *Menologion of Basil* at the date of 11th December is Luke himself. The column is represented as standing amidst the waves, a clear reference to its position near the shore.¹¹⁴ So the traditional stylite life was still being practised in this period, and with the same *rationale* as in earlier times. As Luke Stylites' biographer put it: 'These men abandoned, as being too base a habitation, the earth upon which we all crowd, and placed themselves on pillars'.¹¹⁵ More significantly, however, the stylite régime, still admired as one of the pinnacles of spiritual achievement, was adapted to suit the purposes of the new hybrid monasteries -

¹⁰⁹ *Life of St. Luke Steiriôtes* (M), p. 99.

¹¹⁰ *Life of St. Lazaros*, cc. 22, p. 517; 41, p. 522; 59, p. 528. H. Delchaye 'Les femmes stylites', *AB* 27 (1908) 391-2 cites three other examples of this interesting phenomenon.

¹¹¹ See S. Vanderstuyf, 'Étude sur St. Luc le Stylite', *EO* 12 (1909) 138-44; 214-21; 271-81; 13 (1910) 13-19; 140-8; 224-32.

¹¹² *Life of St. Luke the Stylite*, c. 23, p. 213.

¹¹³ *loc. cit.*, c. 26, p. 217.

¹¹⁴ See *Il Menologio di Basilio II* (Cod. Vaticanus Greco 1613), 2 vols. (Turin 1907), i, no. 238, pp. 64-5; ii, pl. 238. For a description of the site, J. Pargoire 'Hiera', *IRAIK* 4, 2 (1899) pp. 9-18.

¹¹⁵ *Life of St. Luke the Stylite*, c. 5, p. 193.

a process which ultimately led to its decline.

In some cases, even the physical environment was altered. St. Paul of Latros spent twelve years on what he termed a *stylos*. It was, in fact, a cave at the top of a steep rock. Interestingly enough, its previous occupant, one Athanasios, had wished to have a proper *stylos* built, but had himself been shown the cave by a previous hermit.¹¹⁶ Cyril Phileôtes constructed a cell in a pine forest near Derkos in Thrace (c. 1051-6) on the spot where he had seen a *vision* of a *stylos*.¹¹⁷ In other cases, the traditional withdrawn existence of the stylite was replaced by an active involvement in the affairs of a neighbouring monastic community, rather than merely a reliance upon it for food. Paul of Latros directed a monastery from his cave - *stylos*, so too did St. Lazaros, who lived in at least two *styloi* and in a cave which may well have been at the top of a rock. So in the same way as the concept of solitude played a vital rôle in the thinking of the monastic founders of the tenth and eleventh centuries, so, too, did the most extreme forms of ascetic exercise epitomised by the life of the stylites. But in its modified form, this life was no longer available to all who could withstand its rigours. The *stylos* became another symbol of spiritual leadership; the life of a stylite was a coveted accolade to be awarded (or permitted), like the right to live as a hesychast, to the most outstanding amongst the monastic brethren. In this way, a life which was originally intended to bring its practitioners nearer to Heaven and away from terrestrial concerns, became itself an adjunct to a religious life led firmly in the world.

The variety of religious experience and organisation open to the pious Byzantine of the tenth or eleventh century was considerable. It is impossible to estimate with any degree of accuracy how many practised each of the various forms, since statistical information is lacking.¹¹⁸ But there are clear indications that some of the more individual forms of asceticism were being absorbed into the communal framework and adapted by it. The completely solitary life declined. Many of the founders of the *lavrae* spent periods in seclusion, but they

¹¹⁶ *Life of St. Paul the Younger*, cc. 13, p. 42-3; 20, pp. 57-8.

¹¹⁷ *Life of St. Cyril Phileôtes*, c. 22, p. 332.

¹¹⁸ *pace* P. Charanis, 'The Monk as an element in Byzantine Society', *DOP* 25 (1971) 63-84, *rep.* in *Social, Economic and Political Life in the Byzantine Empire* (1973), whose figures for the monastic population of the Empire are based on incomplete evidence.

all either emerged from it to join communities, or gathered disciples to form them. Many of the traditional eremitic habits, the *styloi*, the rigorous spiritual exercises and the rough clothing were still followed, but in the context of a larger group of monks. In fact, in many of the new foundations of this period, the prevailing mood was compromise. The strict lavriote tradition was compromised in order to receive the large numbers of postulants; the coenobitic tradition modified to allow for the existence of a few hermits outside the walls of the house.

This compromise clearly held great appeal for the Byzantines. It allowed them to continue to place their trust in charismatic individuals (and it should not be forgotten that the fame of the founders of these houses was the first stage in their expansion) and to continue the tradition of 'unofficial' religious activity outside the diocesan framework of bishops and established *hêgoumenoi*. In addition, the communal aspects of these houses created that sense of security and companionship in spiritual endeavour which had always been the mark of the *koinobion*. The outstanding contribution of the lavriote-influenced houses to Byzantine monasticism was this very flexibility. It allowed the individual full opportunity to begin his spiritual development within a community, and then, if showed himself worthy, to progress into the solitary life. Two streams of monasticism are visible in the tenth and eleventh centuries. The first, the lavriote-influenced communities, grew up around those with unusual spiritual gifts, and absorbed the holy men who in previous centuries had remained separate. The more traditional houses, with their emphasis on the subjugation of the individual to the community and the community to its liturgical and charitable duties, continued to flourish. Both, however, had one thing in common: they needed the support and patronage of the secular world. The mechanisms by which this was obtained are a reflexion of the importance placed in Byzantium on the monastic life.

The monastic expansion of the tenth and eleventh centuries was sparked by the fire of the holy men, but it was fuelled by the enthusiasm of the laity. The motives which lay behind Byzantine piety in general and donations to churches in particular, were mixed. On the one hand, the old classical virtue of *philanthrôpia* was seen as a mark of proper behaviour, especially in rulers.¹¹⁹ On the other, the perfor-

¹¹⁹ H. Hunger, 'Φιλανθρωπία'. Eine griechische Wortprägung auf ihrem Weg von Aischylos bis

mance of good works, however humble, increased the prospect of salvation for the individual concerned. The most important type of donation was, of course, that of land. This type of gift represented not only an appreciable transfer of assets at the time, but a basis for future landed growth. But more straightforward gifts of money, precious vessels or books were also common in the period.

Two important questions arise when one considers the mechanisms of donation. What were the motives for donation and what decided the direction in which it should be channelled? It can be shown that the establishments to which Byzantines gave money and lands were fairly strictly defined by a number of criteria apart from personal inclination. Family and political connections played their part, as did fashions in spirituality. On the highest level, imperial benefaction was seen as part of the ruler's concern for his people's prosperity and success, in fact, an affair of state. As a consequence of these initially spiritual links between individuals, families, holders of the imperial office and particular religious houses, it is possible to number some of them amongst the most important power bases in the Byzantine state in the tenth and eleventh centuries.

Although there are many pitfalls and difficulties in the elucidation of individual religious orientation and the way it is articulated, a surprising amount of material exists from which one may catch a glimpse of the attitudes of individual Byzantines, or indications of commonly held views. The prefaces, or *prooimia* to the *typika* setting out the regulations and possessions of the great coenobitic houses frequently contain biographical details of their founders and it is by comparing these that we may begin to discern some common motives for donation. The best examples come from the *Typika* of Gregory Pakourianos (Bačkovo), Michael Attaleiates (houses in Rhaidesto and Constantinople) and Irene Doukaina (Kecharitomênê). To these may be added the will of the Anatolian magnate, Eustathios Boïlas, composed c. 1059.¹²⁰ It is clear from these examples that the donors were old and, in the nature of things, expected to die in the fairly near future. The in-

Theodore Metochites', *Anzeiger des phil. - hist. Kl. d. Österr. Akad. d. Wiss.* (1963) pp. 1-20.

¹²⁰ See S. Vryonis, 'The will of a Provincial Magnate, Eustathios Boïlas (1059)', *DOP* 9 (1957) 263-77, repr. in *Byzantium: Its Internal History and Relations With the Muslim World* (1971). See also the new ed. by P. Lemerle, in *Cinq études sur le XI^e siècle byzantine* (Paris 1977) pp. 20-9.

timations of mortality in the case of Attaleiates, Pakourianos and Boilas, were heightened by the fact that other members of their families had recently died. Attaleiates tells us that the beginning of his charitable activity was in response to his wife's dying wish;¹²¹ Boilas that the deaths of both his wife and one of their sons brought a realisation of the indiscriminate nature of death: 'and in the circumstances, the recollection of death continually spurring me on, I decided to arrange my affairs'.¹²² The prospect of approaching death was thus the catalyst of action; the form this action took was very much dictated by traditional customs. For considerable emphasis is placed in these documents on the orthodox up-bringing which these donors have enjoyed. 'From a child (writes Attaleiates) I was instructed in religion by my faithful parents, who held from their ancestors decent and proper attitudes towards God'.¹²³ Boilas expressed the same idea: 'I was, from the beginning and through my ancestors, of a free estate and sound nature and in all ways Orthodox according to the precept and rule of the seven holy ecumenical councils'.¹²⁴ Pakourianos, a Georgian, uses the same *topos*, but with an understandable emphasis on his people's acceptance of correct doctrine.¹²⁵ So subsequent donations were seen as action totally in keeping with their birthright as Orthodox believers, and the logical culmination of their lives as Christians.

They were also concerned to show a proper appreciation of the signs of spiritual protection and the intervention of Providence which had been manifested to them. A passage from Attaleiates' *Typikon* may serve as a characteristic example:

I, throughout my life, have remained scornful of His unutterable patience towards me and His goodness towards my many severe faults— for not only did I see His desire and not perform it, and returned the talent given me without any profit, but I was forgetful of His holy gifts and graces and remained unaware of His protection from evil.¹²⁶

¹²¹ *Typikon of Attaleiates*, p. 294.

¹²² *Will of Eustathios Boilas*, p. 265 (Vryonis), p. 21 (Lemerle).

¹²³ *Typikon of Attaleiates*, p. 293.

¹²⁴ *Will of Eustathios Boilas*, p. 265 (Vryonis), p. 21 (Lemerle).

¹²⁵ *Typikon of Bačkovo*, p. 8.

¹²⁶ *Typikon of Attaleiates*, p. 294.

The formalised repentance of such passages was intended to re-establish the credentials of the donors as pious Christians, of crucial importance, since their gifts could have no merit if not given in the correct spirit of humility. In recognising and showing gratitude for the divine protection of the past, the intercession with God of Christ, the Virgin and the saints might perhaps be assured in the future. The desire for intercession is also implicit in the diplomatic *formulae* found both in these *typika* and in other types of donation document. The establishments were actually granted to Christ, the Virgin or the saints in exactly the same way as, in the secular sphere, property might be transferred to other individuals. Their protection was invoked to preserve the foundation from attack. Attaleiates again provides an example: 'I sanctify all (my property) to the most great and merciful God and I appoint Him heir (*klêronomos*) and guardian (*pronoêtês*) and master of all this donation'.¹²⁷ Eustathios Boïlas appointed as administrators of his will 'the Lord Pantokratôr and Her who bore Him without seed'.¹²⁸ The emphasis on correct doctrine and gratitude for Divine protection were probably the strongest motives behind monastic patronage. They were particularly evident in those who founded or made gifts to coenobitic houses. For here the sheer force of the number of prayers offered by the monks in favour of their founders might be hoped to have effect.

Although the salvation of the soul of the donor was the main purpose of his gift, he could also hope to widen the potential scope of divine grace. For *typika* and other donation documents contain an equally strong emphasis on the family of the donor. Mention is specifically made not only of the parents who were responsible for correct spiritual education in youth, but also the relatives and descendants of the donor. The family was jointly responsible for the maintenance of memorial ceremonies and of prayers for the dead. Members who predeceased the author of the *typikon* were included in its liturgical provisions. In his *Typikon*, Michael Attaleiates provides a fine example of such family solidarity and, incidentally, indicates to what degrees

¹²⁷ *loc. cit.*, p. 296.

¹²⁸ *Will of Eustathios Boïlas*, p. 272.

within the family these provisions applied. His first concern was for the upkeep of his own tomb; 8 *nomismata* a year were granted to the Church of St. George Kyparissiôtes in Constantinople for this purpose.¹²⁹ Ten *nomismata* were to be paid to the same church to ensure the performance of correct memorial prayers for himself, his two dead wives Sophia and Eirêne and his children Eirênikos and Kalê, who had pre-deceased him.¹³⁰ Other donations were to be made to the Monasteries of St. Nicholas *tou Phalkônos* (3 *nomismata*) and St. George and the Nunnery of St. Prokopios (2 *nomismata*) at Rhaidesto and the Church of the Theotokos *tês Daphnês* at Constantinople (2 *nomismata*).¹³¹ His name was to be entered upon the diptychs of these houses and *trisagia* were to be said for the emperors on his behalf.¹³² Attaleiates also made careful provision that the monies for these memorials should be paid by his heirs. If not, after the second or third request of the *hêgoumenos* concerned, they could be directly deducted from the revenues of his property.¹³³ But the initial responsibility for these liturgical observances was firmly placed on his heir (Theodore, his son) and his male descendants.¹³⁴ Gregory Pakourianos made similar provisions on an even more lavish scale. The occasion for both charitable donations to the poor and memorial services for himself were to be the Feast of St. Eustathios (20th September) the date of the death of his beloved brother Aspasios, and the day on which he himself should die.¹³⁵ His friends were abjured not to let his name be forgotten and to ensure, most importantly of all, that the rites were correctly observed.¹³⁶ Pakourianos quotes the Biblical text, 'Each shall receive his own reward according to his labour',¹³⁷ and it is clear that the labour

¹²⁹ *Typikon of Attaleiates*, p. 305.

¹³⁰ *ibid.*, *loc. cit.*

¹³¹ *loc. cit.*, p. 306.

¹³² *ibid.*, p. 306; 310; 314; For the *trisagion*, see N.K. Moran, *The Ordinary Chants of the Byzantine Mass*, 2 vols. (Hamburg 1975) pp. 57-83.

¹³³ *Typikon of Attaleiates*, p. 309.

¹³⁴ *loc. cit.*, p. 298.

¹³⁵ *Typikon of Bačkovo*, pp. 40-3.

¹³⁶ *loc. cit.*, p. 41.

¹³⁷ *ibid.*, cf. I Cor. iii, 8.

consisted not only in the very act of establishing a religious house and in charitable donations, but in making provision for the annual commemoration of these actions through the memorial liturgies.

But only the immediate family was involved. Whilst wives, brothers, sisters and children might be commemorated and expected to bear the responsibility of protecting the foundation, more distant relatives were only incidentally involved in the preservation of the conditions of the *typikon* if the founder's line ran out. Family, not kin, was involved here and the ceremonies undertaken by the monks played an important part in the consolidation of family loyalty. The concern for the perpetuation of the individual and his family was one of the most important links between Byzantine religious attitudes and the political life of the Empire. For the places chosen to receive donations, or even to become the sites of new coenobitic monasteries (those of the *lavrae* were on the whole the choice of the holy men), were often those primarily associated with the family concerned, and the process thus helped to emphasise feelings of local identity. From the more detailed *typika*, it is possible to reconstruct some of these links. Michael Attaleiates' foundations in Constantinople and Rhaidesto were based on establishments which he had received by inheritance. The Monastery of Christ *tou Panoiktimonos* was built on property originally belonging to his sister-in law, the *protospatharissa* Anastaso;¹³⁸ the *ptôchotropheion* at Rhaidesto on land originally acquired by his aunt, Euphrosyne.¹³⁹ Similar family or professional associations dictated the choice of the churches and monasteries to receive donations and to be entrusted with commemorations. The Church of St. George *Kyparissiotês* was probably a foundation patronised by the Attaleiates family;¹⁴⁰ the Nunnery of St. Prokopios and the two other monasteries were in a town where Attaleiates had family and, probably, business connections.¹⁴¹ His devotion to the Church of the Theotokos *tês Daph-*

¹³⁸ *Typikon of Attaleiates*, p. 297. See also the Chrysobull of Nikêphoros Botaneiates (Dölger, *Regesten*, no. 1042), 1079, *MM*, v, pp. 138-45. For the site of the house, R. Janin, *La géographie ecclésiastique de l'empire byzantin. I Le siège de Constantinople et le patriarcat oecuménique, tome iii, Les églises et les monastères* (2nd. ed. Paris 1969) pp. 512-3.

¹³⁹ *Typikon of Attaleiates*, p. 297.

¹⁴⁰ Janin, *Eglises et monastères*, p. 70.

¹⁴¹ See G.I. Bratianu, 'Une expérience d'économie dirigée: le monopole du blé à Byzance au XI^e siècle

nês might be associated with his senatorial rank, since it was in this church that the Emperor, on 1st January, distributed laurel wreaths to the members of the senate. The church may well have received donations from them in return.¹⁴²

The association of family and place of origin was another aspect of the localism expressed by patronage. Eustathios Boïlas' family eventually settled on lands on the eastern frontier of the Empire, but in his will, Eustathios made provision for donations to a house in his birth-place of Cappadocia.¹⁴³ Pakourianos' *Typikon* perhaps best illustrates the beginnings of the process of territorial association, though in his case the example has an extra dimension. For he was establishing roots in a province far removed from his homeland of Georgia and himself initiating local links. The establishment of the Monastery at Bačkovo was the culmination of a long period of land accumulation in Thrace and Macedonia, of which the formidable list of confirmatory chrysobulls consigned to Hagia Sophia for safe-keeping bears eloquent witness.¹⁴⁴ Though Pakourianos does not appear to have had any children and can thus not be said to have perpetuated his family links in the strict sense, his prohibition on Greeks entering the monastery can be seen as a similarly exclusive action. Fellow countrymen, in this case Georgians, rather than the immediate relatives were thus charged with the perpetuation of the memory of the donor, but the process was essentially the same.¹⁴⁵

cle', *Byz* 9 (1934) 643-43, espec. p. 655, for the growing importance of Rhaidesto, and especially its trade with the Adriatic, at this time. Attaleiates himself provides in his *History*, the only original source for the attempted establishment of an imperial monopoly of corn in Rhaidesto by Michael VII Doukas. (*Attaleiates*, pp. 202-4). His might have been amongst the business interests threatened. For Attaleiates properties, see *Typikon*, pp. 296-300 and Lemerle, *Cinq Études*, pp. 101-2.

¹⁴² Janin, *Eglises et Monastères*, p. 173. For Attaleiates' senatorial rank, see *Typikon*, p. 293. Chrysobull of Michael Doukas (Dölger, *Regesten*, no. 1005), 1074, *MM* v, pp. 135-8.

¹⁴³ *Will of Eustathios Boïlas*, p. 271, Lemerle, *Cinq études*, p. 27.

¹⁴⁴ *Typikon of Bačkovo*, pp. 55-6. For the location of the Pakourianos properties see C. Asdracha, *La région des Rhodopes aux XIIIe et XIVe siècles. Etude de géographie historique* (Athens 1976) *passim*, and Lemerle, *op. cit.*, pp. 175-81.

¹⁴⁵ Another example of this type of identification is, of course, the Georgian Monastery of Iberon on Mount Athos. See *Life of SS. John and Euthymios*, pp. 62-7 where strong hostility to Greeks is expressed.

Remembrance of the donor and the provision for intercessions for his soul were motives most visible in donations made in old age and the prospect of approaching death an important catalyst, but commemoration of other important events in the patron's life could also be expressed by gifts to religious houses. Gratitude for a successful period of office, or, in the case of soldiers, a victorious campaign, can also be cited as motivating factors. In contrast, improper behaviour could be vitiated by donation. Two examples may perhaps suffice to illustrate these themes. The so-called 'Dove-Cote' Church near Göreme in Cappadocia bears two inscriptions referring to individuals portrayed there. The first asks for the prayers of the monks for the Emperor Nikêphoros Phokas and other members of his family, the second for the Armenian general, Mleh. The occasion for the donation of these frescoes was probably the successful campaign waged by the two men in Cilicia in 964, before which they had passed through Cappadocia, a region with which the Phokades had family ties. It has been suggested that the theme of the apparition of the Angel to Joshua also portrayed in the Church, might itself be taken as further emphasis of the theme of victory.¹⁴⁶

The twelfth-century inscriptions of the Church of St. Chrysostom at Koutsoveni in Cyprus (founded c. 1090), on the other hand, clearly indicate a case where the motives of the donor were those of remorse. One of two inscriptions (on the south-east peir) has survived almost intact and declares that the *doux* of Cyprus, Eumathios Philokales: 'built unto Thee this church from the very foundations to expiate the wicked actions which he has erred in committing'.¹⁴⁷ The circumstances which led to this act of contrition are obscure, but the motive, doubtless shared by many founders and benefactors of monastic houses is not

¹⁴⁶ See G. der Jerphanion, *Une nouvelle province de l'art byzantine; les églises rupestres de Cappadoce*, 3 vols. (Paris 1925-42) I: 2, pp. 520-550; M. Restlé, *Byzantine Wall Painting in Asia Minor*, 3 vols. (Shannon 1969) I, p. 135; S. Kostof, *Caves of God* (M.I.T., 1972) p. 210 makes the connection with the campaign of 964. cf. *Leo diac.*, pp. 51-4, *Cedrenus*, III, p. 361. For Mleh (Melias), see H. Grégoire, 'Notes Epigraphiques VII: Mélias le Magister', *Byz* 8 (1933). 79-88; P. Charanis, *The Armenians in the Byzantine Empire* (Lisbon, 1963) pp. 33; 44. His seal is probably that of the *magistros* Melias printed by G. Schlumberger, *Sigillographie byzantine* (Paris 1884) p. 274.

¹⁴⁷ C. Mango and E. J. W. Hawkins, 'Report on Field Work in Istanbul and Cyprus, 1962-1963', *DOP* 18 (1964) 319-40, cf. 325-6.

and again illustrates the place of donation as a confirmation of the donor's proper sense of the need to reform.

In many cases, donors, especially those from an educated and socially significant class, indicated or explained their actions and found in this very self-revelation an important part of the process of repentance. But the setting up and support of small, local religious houses can also be explained by an unselfconscious and natural religiosity. A novel of Basil II (996) describes the process by which the most humble land-holder might devote his property (and himself) to the religious life:

For they say it happens in many of the villages
that the peasant builds a church on his land and with the
permission of his fellow villagers, grants it all his property
then becomes a monk and spends the rest of his life
there.¹⁴⁸

Active involvement in the foundation and endowment of monasteries was a perfectly familiar step for large numbers of anonymous Byzantines. But since so often the motives were linked with local associations and family centres, it is not surprising that coenobitic monasteries, large and small, were most usually associated with lay foundation and patronage. But this was not exclusively the case, as we shall see.

But if it was the habit of all good Byzantine Christians to turn to the monastic communities for the expression and promotion of their own type of spirituality, it was particularly the duty of the state, with the Emperor at its head, to ensure that suitable conditions existed in which this could be done and to promote the spiritual welfare of the Byzantine people as a whole. Indeed, apart from the members of the immediate family, the individuals for whom prayers were most commonly requested in *typika* and other documents of donation were the emperors. The rationale for this was clearly expressed by Michael Attaleiates, when he requested that a *trisagion* should be said for them:

For it is fitting for him [the emperor] to look to
the wishes of the founders and to protect the holy
establishments and maintain the pious chrysobulls
granted to them so that the holy men may

¹⁴⁸ Zepos, I, coll. iii. Doc. xix, pp. 263-72, cf. p. 263.

commend their lives to God and offer prayers for their safety and for the elevation of their standards, the campaigning and victory of the army, the governance of the commonwealth and its spiritual welfare and those things pleasing to God.¹⁴⁹

It would, of course, be interesting to know whether prayers for the emperors were specifically requested in the small rural *eukteria*, or whether this was an example of aristocratic solidarity. It is impossible to know for certain since no *typika* for these humble establishments have survived, even if they ever existed. A *typikon* of Constantine Monomachos for Athos (September, 1045) actually enumerates a list of imperial responsibilities similar to that of Attaleiates: to control political affairs; to concern himself with the army; to make foreign wars; to conquer cities; to protect the holy canons and to ensure the welfare of 'those who have fled the world, especially to the holy mountains'.¹⁵⁰ The monastic life, especially, was seen not only as the highest form of religious life, and thus beneficial to those who practised it, but also a means by which the maximum number (and most efficacious) prayers could be offered on behalf of the state. The *typika* of Attaleiates, Pakourianos, Irene Doukaina and the Will of Eustathios Boilas make it clear that this was one of the functions of the great coenobitic houses.¹⁵¹ But there is also evidence that it was a prime concern of the *lavrae* of the holy mountains. The necessity for this type of intercession was clearly greatest in time of war and on a number of occasions in the tenth century, when the Byzantine state was in great danger, imperial appeals were made for the spiritual assistance of the monks. In a speech to be delivered to the armies of the East as they left to campaign against Tarsos in 952-3, the Emperor Constantine Porphyrogenetos assured his troops that:

Having called upon the most worthy and holy fathers who sit upon the mountains and in caves and holes in the ground for their prayers, and having exhorted them for their supplications, we have ordained that

¹⁴⁹ *Typikon of Attaleiates*, p. 320.

¹⁵⁰ *Prôtaton*, no. 8 (1045).

¹⁵¹ See Bačkovo, p. 9; *Kecharitoménē*, p. 329; *Will of Eustathios Boilas*, pp. 270; 272.

the same shall be done in the churches and monasteries of the God-guarded City.¹⁵²

Letters requesting such intercession have also survived from the tenth century. One, drafted by the *magistros* and logothete of the drome, Symeon, was directed to the communities of Olympos, Latros, Kyminas and Athos as well as the Metropolitan of Kyzikos and asked for prayers against the muslim Hamdanids.¹⁵³ A second, dating from the same period, mentions the particular spiritual gifts of a certain monk of Olympos, Dermokaïtes, whilst making a general plea for prayers for an army about to leave for Calabria.¹⁵⁴ Such actions reveal an important motive for the official patronage of monasteries - the belief that the monks could provide re-inforcements on a non-combative, but not inactive level. Though such request were most frequently made in time of war, the importance of monastic prayers for the emperor and empire was a constant theme of monastic documents throughout this period. The monks themselves considered it an important part of their spiritual labours; indeed, a letter from the monks of Athos to the Emperor Alexios Komnenos clearly said as much.¹⁵⁵

In this way, the motive of intercession can be seen in action in the political as well as the personal sphere, but through essentially similar mechanisms. Whilst the individual founder was commemorated in the liturgy as one whose personal charity had brought the house in to being, the emperor was commemorated as the symbol of that stability and protection which allowed all religious life in the Empire to flourish.

The general motives for donation may therefore be summed up, so far as the individual was concerned, as the manifestation of a repentant soul which then might be deemed worthy of salvation. The way in

¹⁵² H. Ahrweiler, 'Un discours inédit de Constantine VII Porphyrogénète', *TM* 2 (1967) pp. 343-404.

¹⁵³ J. Darrouzès, *Epistoliers byzantines du X^e siècle*, (Paris 1970) I, Letter 83, pp. 146-7.

¹⁵⁴ *loc. cit.*, Letter 88, p. 149. Dermokaïtes is mentioned in *Theoph. cont.*, VI, p. 440 interceding for the soul of Romanos Lekapenos so that the pages of a mysterious book containing his sins were rendered blank. For other members of the family, see D.M. Nicol, 'The Byzantine Family of Dermokaïtes, c. 940-1453', *BS* 35 (1974) 1-11 and A.P. Kazhdan, 'The Byzantine family of Dermokaïtes. Additions to the Article by D.M. Nicol in *BS* (1974) 1-11' *BS* 36 (1975) 192.

¹⁵⁵ *Diégésis meriké tón epistolón Alexiou basileós kai Nicholaou patriarchou, genomené kata diaphorous kairous*, in Meyer, *Haupturkunden*, pp. 163-84. cf. p. 166.

which this was done was by acquiring a share of the prayers offered up by religious houses and by this very action, establishing the social conformity and status of the donor and his family. On a larger scale, the patron could also feel that he was playing his part in upholding the fortunes of the emperors and their rule. Patronage of monastic houses was an accepted and admired aspect of Byzantine social behaviour. But material gifts, especially of land, had to be specifically directed. What criteria determined the patron's choice of establishment?

As far as the rich were concerned, the question is relatively simple to answer. Members of the imperial family and rich aristocrats were certainly in a position to found and build monastic houses. The eleventh century, in contrast to the tenth (which saw extensive renovations of existing monuments), was a period of *construction* of monastic houses.¹⁵⁶ It was this kind of conspicuous expenditure which was undertaken by members of the most aristocratic families - such as Attaleiates and Pakourianos. They might also make donations to existing houses, but it was both praiseworthy and prestigious to found and endow houses themselves. But the foundation of a great coenobitic house was not within the grasp of any but a small, wealthy élite. The very poor, or at least those with access to a little land, could put up small houses for themselves, but this was hardly an answer for those who did not wish to enter the monastic life. Less wealthy patrons had to content themselves with less lavish establishments or channel their goods into existing houses.

The factors which determined the direction that this patronage took might be territorial. As well as strengthening their local ties by founding houses, individuals could make their donations to the existing houses of the region. The hagiographic accounts of the lavriote foundations of Western Asia Minor provide some interesting examples of this tendency, as does the history of the monasteries of Athos. The Lavra of the Stylos, founded by St. Paul of Latros, received gifts in the tenth century from a certain Michael, an official in charge of the *basilika ktêmata* in the area around Ephesos.¹⁵⁷ St. Lazaros' first foun-

¹⁵⁶ See C. Mango, 'Les monuments de l'architecture de XI^e siècle et leur signification historique et sociale', *TM* vi (1976) 351-64, pp. 353-5.

¹⁵⁷ *Life of St. Paul of Latros*, c. 30, p. 138.

donation on Mount Galesion, the Lavra of St. Macrina, received goods from a rich woman from Calabria, Judith, who had recently settled in the area, and from the Metropolitan of Ephesos himself.¹⁵⁸ On Kos, the local inhabitants assisted Christodoulos with the construction of his monastery at Pilè,¹⁵⁹ and much of the landed wealth of the Athonite houses came from the accumulation of the gifts of small landowners. The same tendency is visible in Cappadocia, where the few identifiable figures of donors attributable to this period seem to be people with local connections.¹⁶⁰ But this perfectly natural association of donation and family or professional locality can only be seen as an explanation for the patronage of houses which were already established and part of the spiritual 'scenery'. The problem still remains; how did houses attract the initial lay support which enabled them both to survive and expand?

Perhaps the strongest determinant was the relationship between potential donor and the religious leader of the establishment concerned. This could exist on a number of levels: association by family ties, by ties of spiritual relationship, through admiration of the type of monasticism practised in the house and as a consequence of previous services rendered by the holy men to the laity.

One of the clearest cases in which the ties of family loyalty may be seen at work is that of the patronage by Nikêphoros Phokas and his brother, Bardas, of the Lavra of Michael Maleïnos on Mount Kyminas and subsequently the Great Lavra on Mount Athos. Michael was the uncle by marriage of the Phokas brothers.¹⁶¹ His own family, the Maleïnoi, came from the military aristocracy (as did the Phokades) and probably also from Cappadocia.¹⁶² It is not surprising, then, that we find the young general, Nikêphoros and his brother making frequent visits to Mount Kyminas and continuing their patronage of the

¹⁵⁸ *Life of St. Lazaros*, cc. 33, p. 519; 34, p. 520.

¹⁵⁹ *Diathêkê of Christodoulos: Testamentum Sancti Christodouli*, MM, vi, pp. 81-5, cf. p. 63. See Vranousses, *Hagiologika Keimena*, pp. 100-7.

¹⁶⁰ Kostof, *Caves of God*, pp. 153 ff. on Cappadocian donors.

¹⁶¹ See Petit's notes to the *Life of St. Michael Maleïnos*, pp. 585-7.

¹⁶² Michael himself was born at Charsianon (Muslim kale, west of Sivas) in Cappadocia: *Life of St. Michael Maleïnos*, p. 550.

houses in the area even after the foundation of Nikêphoros' favourite establishment, the Lavra on Athos.

But whilst family loyalties based on ties of blood were strong, an even more powerful link between donor and recipient seems to have been that of 'spiritual' kinship. Spiritual fathers were frequently amongst the closest advisors of men in positions of power and influence in Byzantium. The advice they gave was instrumental in shaping affairs of state. The spiritual father was usually chosen as someone with whom the layman (or ecclesiastic) felt some affinity, or, in some cases, a charismatic figure who had become a fashionable confessor. Symeon the New Theologian, the most celebrated spiritual father of the period, laid great importance on the fact that the spiritual son (or daughter) had to open his heart completely to his adviser.¹⁶³

The relationship was to be one of complete openness and trust. But the association could develop into something rather more complex. A passage in the *Life of St. Cyril Phileôtes* indicates how spiritual fathers could become constant companions of their 'children' and not merely subject to occasional consultation. On a visit to Cyril, the Emperor Alexios Komnenos described the devotion of a previous spiritual father, Ignatios, who had been appointed by his mother to accompany him on his campaign against Roussel of Bailleul (1074) and who comforted him when he was suffering from cold and illness.¹⁶⁴ Groups already bound together by friendship strengthened their ties by associating themselves with the same spiritual father. But the institution was not exclusively aristocratic. An act of donation from the archives of the Lavra on Mount Athos, that of Constantine and Maria Lagoudes (Feb. 1014), was made 'because of the strongest attachment' the couple had felt throughout their lives to their spiritual father Theodoret, the *hégoumenos* of the monastery.¹⁶⁵ There is no evidence to indicate that they were either particularly wealthy or well-born. The ties of spiritual

¹⁶³ See *La vie de Syméon le Nouveau Theologien par Nicéte Stéthate*, ed. and trans. I. Hausherr and G. Horn (Rome 1928); *Life of Symeon the New Theologian*; his copious collection of homilies contains frequent references to the institution of the spiritual father. See the *Catecheses*, ed. B. Krivochéine, trans. J. Paramelle, 3 vols. (Paris 1963-5); *Chapitres Théologiques, Gnostiques et Ethniques*, ed. and trans. J. Darrouzès, 2 vols. (Paris 1966-7).

¹⁶⁴ *Life of St. Cyril Phileôtes*, c. 17, pp. 91-3.

¹⁶⁵ *Lavra*, no. 18, (1014).

relationship were of crucial importance in determining which individual holy men became famous and which of their foundations flourished.

In addition, the spiritual children of outstanding religious figures considered that they had supernatural powers. Nikêphoros Phokas, according to the historian Scylitzes, was accustomed to sleep wrapped in a bear-skin once worn by his uncle, Michael Maleïnos.¹⁶⁶ Another of Michael's spiritual children, Athanasios of Athos, took with him Michael's *koukoulion*, or cowl, when he left Kyminas and 'wore it as a protection in life and when dying, had it placed in his tomb'.¹⁶⁷ If the protection offered by talismans belonging to spiritual fathers was sought after by their 'children', so, too, were the powers of prophecy with which many of them were popularly endowed. It was a gift which, as we have seen, was primarily associated with those who led a wholly or partly eremitic life. An association may be suggested, indeed, between the recipients of correct prophecy and their subsequent patronage of those who had foretold the future.

The clearest instances in which prophecy and patronage can be linked are those concerning figures who held, or eventually gained, the imperial rank and the members of the highest court circles. But it is unusual for hagiographers not to mention at least one or two celebrated figures contemporary with their subjects. To take some examples from the tenth and eleventh centuries one may cite St. Basil the Younger's warning to two young *protospatharioi* of Constantinople not to take part in the doomed revolt of Constantine Doukas (917); St. Nikêphoros' warning to the general, Nikêtas that his expedition to Sicily (that of 964) would fail¹⁶⁹ and St. Lazaros' warning to the Eparch of Constantinople of imminent disorder (in fact, the revolt against Michael V Kalaphates in April, 1042) and to the courtier Constantine Barys of his imminent downfall.¹⁷⁰ Predictions of a rise to the imperial rank are particularly interesting. Constantine Monomachos' accession was predicted while he was still at Mytilene, by, it would appear,

¹⁶⁶ Scylitzes, p. 280.

¹⁶⁷ *Life of Athanasios* (B), c. 12, p. 18.

¹⁶⁸ *Life of St. Basil the Younger*, pp. 166 ff. cf. also *Chronicle of Logothete*, pp. 719-21.

¹⁶⁹ *Life of St. Nikêphoros*, c. 10, pp. 142. For the campaign to Sicily, see *Leo diac* iv, 7, pp. 65-8.

¹⁷⁰ *Life of St. Lazaros*, cc. 102, p. 539; 105, p. 540.

monks from both Galesion and Chios¹⁷¹ and Cyril Philéotes predicted the accession of Alexios Komnenos.¹⁷² All the establishments of the holy men concerned later received donations and privileges from the successful candidates.

The constant reference in saints' lives to events of 'national' importance underlines another aspect of the contact between the spiritual and the political worlds - that exchanges between the provincial monastic houses and the capital must have been frequent. In this sense, the *êremia* of the *lavrae* was more a spiritual concept than a social reality. But what ensured this access to the emperor and a favourable reception? The answer must lie, firstly, in the existing standing of such men as accepted counsellors within the imperial circle, and, secondly, in the spiritual inclinations of the emperors themselves. We possess precise information on imperial monastic preferences. It is well known, for example, that Nikêphoros Phokas intended to become a monk in the company of his friend Athanasios of Athos.¹⁷³ His visits to Mount Kyminas had introduced him to the lavriote system of monasticism. His lavish patronage of the Lavra on Mount Athos resulted from his approval of the type of monasticism practised there. Similarly, Constantine Monomachos' endowment of the Nea Monê on Chios and Nikephoros Botaneiates' patronage of Christodoulos' monasteries on Kos and Patmos indicate support for the monastic ideals of their founders. On the other hand, Romanos Lekapênos and others clearly combined admiration for the asceticism of the holy mountains with an acceptance of the virtues of the great coenobitic houses. But although each emperor had his own favoured styles of monasticism and patronised houses accordingly, each considered it part of his imperial duty to continue donations made by his predecessor. This is particularly surprising in the case of emperors who had come to power by usurpation or *coup d'état*. But John Tzimiskês continued grants to the Lavra on Athos, even though it had been closely associated with his predecessor Nikêphoros Phokas, almost certainly murdered by John himself.¹⁷⁴ In

¹⁷¹ *Life of St. Lazaros*, c. 230, p. 579. *Mnêmê tôn hosiôn kai theophorôn paterôn hêmôn Ióannou kai Iôsêph tôn en tê Nêsô Chiô askêsantôn* in G. Photeinos, *Ta Neomonésia* (Chios 1865).

¹⁷² *Life of St. Cyril Philéotes*, c. 17, p. 91.

¹⁷³ Athanasios, *Typikon*, p. 103 and *Scylitzes*, p. 255.

¹⁷⁴ *Lavra*, no. 7 (973) although an act of Basil II, recalls the generosity of Tzimiskes.

similar fashion, Michael Doukas confirmed the chrysobulls of Romanos IV Diogenes for Chios.¹⁷⁵ Attaleiates' foundations at Rhaidesto and Constantinople were granted chrysobulls by both Michael VII Doukas and the man who overthrew *him*, Nikêphoros Botaneiates.¹⁷⁶ The fact that the inmates of these houses through their network of lay connections, were potentially influential opponents was a strong pragmatic reason for not antagonising them. But underlying these questions of practical politics lay an important theoretical point. The uninterrupted continuity of imperial patronage, and the confirmation of the chrysobulls was just as important for the grantors as for the holders of such documents. For it gave legitimacy to the status of the monasteries and their lands and also to the emperors themselves. A continuing protection of ecclesiastical foundations was a reflexion of the permanency of the imperial office and, by implication, its present holder.

From the highest ranks in society to the lowest, there is little doubt of the enthusiasm of Byzantines of the period both for the monastic life in general and for the new hybrid style in particular. The number of the monks entering the Great Lavra on Mount Athos (estimated at 120 in 973-78 and 700 by 1045)¹⁷⁷ and to be found in Lazaros' three foundations on Mount Galesion in the mid-eleventh century (64),¹⁷⁸ might seem to suggest an upsurge in the fortunes of the quasi-lavriote monasticism at this time, but we do not know enough about the other houses of the empire, particularly the *koinobia* to be sure that this was the case. But the speed at which the 'hybrid' houses grew is evident enough. Since growth and survival were dependent on resources of both land and money, the social forces which directed the supply of these commodities were clearly important. Patronage was the most important of them. It allowed religious feelings and attitudes to be expressed in a lasting and obvious form. There were certainly attempts on the part of the Byzantine state to direct and control ecclesiastical patronage and to curb the economic and social effects it had, but these must always be considered in the context of a lasting belief in all ranks

¹⁷⁵ *Zepos*, I, *Appendix*, Doc. XX, p. 642 (Dölger, *Regesten*, no. 987), 1072.

¹⁷⁶ *MM*, V, pp. 135-8; 138-45 (Dölger, *Regesten*, nos 1005 and 1042), 1074 and 1079.

¹⁷⁷ *Lavra*, Introduction, pp. 17, 51.

¹⁷⁸ *Life of St. Lazaros*, c. 246, p. 585.

of society in the value of the life led by those seeking the *angelikon bion* and in the basic benefits to be gained from donation to them and patronage of their endeavours.

INFORMATION, DISINFORMATION AND DELAY IN BYZANTINE DIPLOMACY

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Byzantine diplomacy is as much vaunted by modern historians for its wiles and for its «long arm» as it was by foreign contemporary writers. Diplomacy is regarded as one of the Byzantines' foremost skills. Our purpose here is not radically to challenge this consensus - to ask whether Byzantine diplomacy «worked», in the sense of securing the ruler's policy objectives and serving the Empire's interests. What follows is merely a collection of some data which may illustrate the workings of that diplomacy and, in particular, to indicate connexions between apparently unrelated facets of Byzantine strategy, court ceremonial and diplomacy. Some consideration is given to the propaganda put out by the imperial government and to the ideas which the ceremonial acclamations and epithets voiced. Attention is also paid to the reception which the propaganda found among Western writers such as Liudprand of Cremona, and to various forms of contact between the Empire and northern and western peoples. However, no attempt is made at a general investigation of the principles which are held to have underlain Byzantine diplomacy, or at a systematic survey of relations with individual neighbouring peoples or groups of peoples. Numerous works on these themes are already to hand.¹

¹ S. Runciman, *The emperor Romanus Lecapenus and his reign* (Cambridge, 1929) esp. pp. 81-119, 203-228; L. Bréhier, *Les institutions de l'empire byzantin* (Paris, 1970) pp. 229-270; F. Dölger, *Byzanz und die europäische Staatenwelt* (repr. Darmstadt, 1976) esp. pp. 9-115, 159-196; A. Grabar, «God and the family of princes», *Harvard Slavic Studies* 2 (1954) pp. 117-123; G. Ostrogorsky, «The Byzantine emperor and the hierarchical world-order», *Slavonic and East European Review* 35 (1956) pp. 1-14; D. Obolensky, «The principles and methods of Byzantine diplomacy», *Actes du XII Congrès International d'études byzantines*, I (Belgrade, 1963) pp. 45-61; *idem*, «The Empire and its northern neighbours, 565-1018», *Cambridge Medieval History*, IV, pt. 1 (Cambridge, 1966) pp. 473-518 (Obolensky's foregoing two articles repr. in his *Byzantium and the Slavs* (London, 1971));

Our fundamental concern is to demonstrate the close correspondence, in fact symmetry, between certain well-known maxims of Byzantine military strategy and the operations of Byzantine treatment of foreigners in general. The latter complemented the former. Some of the reasons for the Byzantines' disinclination for pitched battles with their northern and western neighbours in the 10th and 11th centuries are discussed in detail, and the extent to which the Byzantines really were well-informed about their neighbours is considered. So is the question of the uses to which the information was actually put. Our conclusion is that Byzantine diplomacy's antennae, if not its executive arm, were indeed long.

Only Byzantium's northern and western neighbours come within our scope. Dealings with a neighbour whose Faith committed him to «Holy War» against Byzantium were bound to differ from those with more or less impoverished and envious barbarians.² The Moslems were anyway likely to be less susceptible to the charms of Byzantium's array of diplomatic devices. They were at least the equals, more often the superiors, of the Greeks in wealth, literacy and culture, and were therefore less likely to be bedazzled or bribed by them. In Islam they had a Faith which, if it was far from always uniting them, did render them less porous to that underground stream of Byzantine diplomacy: religion. Warfare against Moslems was therefore less easily avoidable, although truces could be, and were, regularly made. And, in so far as the imperial armies voluntarily undertook offensive warfare at all, they were more likely to do so in the East than the West. A Byzantine military manual of the late 10th century compared «the territory of the Saracens, which yields plenty, and has such an abundance of cultivated fields» with «the land of the Bulgarians, which lacks every kind of basic

idem. The Byzantine Commonwealth (London, 1971); D.A. Miller, «Byzantine treaties and treaty-making, 500-1025) A.D.», *BS* 32 (1971) 56-76; J. Ferluga, «Die Adressenliste für auswärtige Herrscher aus dem Zeremonienbuch Konstantin Porphyrogenetos», *ZRV* 12 (1971) 157-178, repr. in his *Byzantium on the Balkans* (Amsterdam, 1976) 261-290; ed. H. Hunger, *Das byzantinische Herrscherbild* (Darmstadt, 1975). For the early Byzantine period, see W. Goffart, «Rome, Constantinople and the barbarians», *American Historical Review* 86 (1981) pp. 275-306.

² For aspects of the borderlands between Byzantium and the Abbasid Caliphate pertaining to the 10th, as well as to preceding centuries, see J.F. Haldon and H. Kennedy, «The Arab-Byzantine frontier in the eighth and ninth centuries: military organization and society in the borderlands», *ZRV* 19 (1980) pp. 79-116.

necessity».³ Michael Psellus, caricaturist though he be, may be believed when he portrays Romanus III's ambitions for military victories as focussed on areas which had been the scene of earlier Roman emperors' exploits, the Eastern possessions of the Roman Empire : «There seemed nothing grand [in fighting] the barbarians in the West..., but were he to turn to those living in the East, he thought that he could perform nobly and handle the Empire's affairs extravagantly».⁴ Campaigns were, of course, fought in the West, and major annexations were made there by Basil II. But imperial policy there was more often confined to «containing» or assimilating the western barbarians.

There is a long-lasting close harmony between Byzantine diplomacy's workings and the precepts of Byzantine tactical manuals, the pronouncements of its literary historians and the acclamations - official slogans-chanted in the imperial ceremonies. The groundrules for handling crises arising from barbarian raids and invasions had been worked out in Late Antiquity. The *Strategicon* of Pseudo-Maurice urged that battle with the enemy be avoided. Instead, objectives should be attained by the fullest use of the intellect and, correspondingly, of scouts and spies. A scorched-earth policy is recommended; if force has to be used, it will be most efficacious in the form of ambushes.⁵ Similar advice is given by Leo VI, who reproduces extensive passages of Pseudo-Maurice's work *verbatim*. A couple of statements of Leo VI sum up not only Byzantium's strategy but also its general policy towards its neighbours, all of whom were, to suspicious Byzantine eyes, potential enemies : «To master the enemy by wisdom and stratagems seems to me safer and more profitable than to overcome

³ *Incerti Scriptoris Liber de Re Militari*, ed. R. Vári (Leipzig 1901), p. 38.

⁴ Michael Psellus, *Chronographia*, ed. E. Renauld, I (Paris 1926) pp. 35-36, 37; cf. trs. by E.R.A. Sewter, *Fourteen Byzantine rulers* (Harmondsworth 1966) pp. 66, 67-68.

⁵ Pseudo-Maurice, *Strategicon*, ed. and Rumanian trs. H. Mihăescu (Bucharest 1970) pp. 166-169, 252-253. «Note that full-scale wars against noble peoples who are (our) equals in the orderly deployment of forces, and against rash peoples, are risky. So one should rather deal with such peoples by overall strategy, wisdom, surprises, tricks and deception than by force and open war», *ibid.*, pp. 168-169.

him by violence and force, and than to risk battle face to face». «But say one lot of things to the enemy, and do a different lot of things, and do not communicate to many people vital matters which need to be kept secret, but only to a few, who are truest to you. For the necessity of thus deceiving the enemy has been demonstrated many times.»⁶ These statements might serve as a coda upon the practices of Byzantine diplomacy

The Byzantines made a positive virtue out of their disinclination for «battle face to face». For example, Psellus praises Michael VII for his aversion to «these insanities which men call deeds of Ares», extolling Michael for not being «‘quick on the draw’ for slaughter, and you do not exult in rivers of blood, or revel in the cries of men mangled with whips».⁷ Anna Comnena likewise places a positive value on the minimal use of force. She praises her father for only warring with the barbarians when peaceful methods had failed : «It is the mark of a bad general, when all is peaceful, purposely to provoke his neighbours to war - for peace is the end of all wars. Invariably to prefer war to peace, always to disregard the good end, is typical of foolish commanders and foolish political leaders.»⁸ Such a positive evaluation of peace as the ultimate goal and a facet of wise statecraft is far removed from the *mores* of Byzantium’s northern and western neighbours. In fact it is more akin to that of Erasmus in his *The Complaint of Peace*.⁹ Yet at the same time the Byzantines prided themselves on their practical skills in handling and hoodwinking aggressive barbarians. Theophylact of Ochrid , in an address to Alexius Comnenus, praised his finesse in persuading the Pechenegs to make peace in 1087. Alexius had been «fer-

⁶ Leo VI, *Tactica*, XX, 12, Migne, *PG*, CVII, col. 1017^{B-A}; cf. *ibid.*, XII, 3-4, cols. 805^D - 808^A; XIV, 3, col. 849^A. Cf. A.J. Toynbee, *Constantine Porphyrogenitus and his world* (Oxford 1973), p. 290.

⁷ Michael Psellus, *Scripta Minora*, ed. E. Kurtz and F. Drexler, I (Milan 1936) p. 36. Psellus’ tongue could, of course, twist around quite contradictory sentiments : *ibid.*, pp. 40, 41.

⁸ Anna Comnena, *Alexiad*, XII, 5, ed. B. Leib, III (Paris 1945) pp. 67-68; trs. E.R.A. Sewter, *Alexiad* (Harmondsworth 1969) p. 381. Anna’s statement is all the more noteworthy for the fact that she shared her father’s relish for military action, and sometimes apologizes for his forbearance from battle, e.g. *Alexiad*, XIII, 4, 8, ed. Leib, III, pp. 100, 115; Sew., pp. 405, 416. See G. Buckler, *Anna Comnena* (Oxford 1929) pp. 141-144, 245.

⁹ «If the chief happiness of a ruler is that of his subjects, he must embrace peace. A good leader with the best interests of his subjects always in mind must vicariously detest war», Erasmus, *Complaint of Peace*, in *The Essential Erasmus*, trs. J.P. Dolan (New York 1964), p. 199.

tile in invention, skilled in speaking, many-sided in thought but sweet in giving expression to it...; now dressing down the Scyths with words short and shrill, now offering words soft as flakes of winter snow.» «Another ruler would have shown himself more inflexible than was fitting... but you, when you saw them unruly and with necks as hard as iron, you showed yourself as uncompromising, but when you found them humbling themselves and purging themselves of their insolence, you pitied their condition and extolled *to médên agan* in practice.»¹⁰

Theophylact's oration gives a remarkably frank exposition of Byzantine diplomatic technique. Although in no way secret, it was primarily intended for «home-consumption», being delivered before the emperor and his court on January 6, the Feast of the Epiphany, 1088.¹¹ In the propaganda embodied in the court ceremonial, a loftier note is struck. No mention is made of the qualities of intelligence, williness or flexibility. One of the predominant themes in the ceremonial acclamations is the emperor's role as «peacemaker» (*eirênopoios*). This was hailed a mark of strength, not weakness. For example, the army chanted almost in the same breath : «Many years to the triumph-bringing emperors!... Many years to the peace-making emperors!»¹² This sentiment is, in another acclamation, interwoven with the motifs of a pacific disposition and of great power. These are represented as being attributes of both the emperor and of God : «The right hand of our God doeth valiantly, sovereigns, peace has taken hold of His [God's] own kingdom and has raised it to Grace through Him, in the Faith. Rejoice, heavenly armies of angels! Rejoice with them, army of the Romans!» State ceremonial thus exalted and solemnized peace, and eventual eternal peace, as forming part of God's plan for His victorious people and, seemingly, for all mankind.¹³ Byzantine acclama-

¹⁰ P. Gautier, «Le discours de Théophylacte de Bulgarie à l'autocrator Alexis I Comnène (6 Janvier, 1088)», *REB* 20 (1962) Greek text, pp. 112-113, trs. p. 124.

¹¹ P. Gautier, «Discours de Théophylacte», pp. 93-94.

¹² Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *De Cerimoniis*, I, 86 (77), ed. A. Vogt, II (Paris 1939) p. 174; cf. *ibid.*, I, 72 (63) pp. 90, 91.

¹³ Const. Porph., *De Cer.*, I, 5, ed. A. Vogt, I (Paris 1935) p. 43; O. Treitinger, *Die Oströmische Kaiser- und Reichsidee nach ihrer Gestaltung im höfischen Zeremoniell* (repr. Darmstadt 1956) pp. 230-231; D.A. Miller, *Byz. treaties*, p. 56. The opening phrase of this acclamation echoes Ps. CXVIII.

¹⁶ On Byzantine eschatology, see P.J. Alexander, «The strength of Empire and Capital as seen

tions and other State propaganda sought to convince foreigners, and the emperor's own subjects, that Byzantium's stance was not born of weakness or inferiority in relation to its neighbours. The preference for peace was represented as a policy adopted by free will, and in accordance with the values of the Byzantines' religion. *Philanthropia*, compassion, mildness and kindness were basic attributes of the emperor, as the acclamations emphasized.¹⁴ At the same time, they conveyed the message that Byzantine armies had, as it were, «non-conventional», supernatural, forces at their disposal, should the need arise.

There were, of course, many other themes in the acclamations. These have been studied and related to Byzantine ideology by various scholars.¹⁵ Here there is room to point out only some facets of the ceremonial which were most likely to impress upon barbarians the futility of warfare against the Byzantines, and the desirability of peace. The ceremonies sought to depict vividly to beholders the firm stability and orderliness, the great antiquity, and the utter irremovability, of the imperial regime, and to emphasize the special relationship of the emperor and his family with God : God willed that they should rule the Empire, and that the Empire should survive.

Orderly, regular ceremonies were beyond the means or capabilities of the rulers of the peoples to Byzantium's north and west : the ability to orchestrate complicated and costly rituals, and to stage them regularly, must in itself have evoked envy and admiration from barbarian potentates. Constantine VII's foreword to his *De Cerimoniis* implies Byzantine awareness, and exploitation, of this : «By means of a praiseworthy order of ceremonies, the imperial power is demonstrated to be more orderly and all the more decorous, and on account of this is wonderful in the eyes of foreigners and of our own

through Byzantine eyes», *Speculum* 37 (1962) p. 344, repr. in his *Religious and political history and thought in the Byzantine Empire* (London, 1978); C. Mango, *Byzantium. The Empire of New Rome* (London 1980) pp. 203 ff..

¹⁴ O. Treitinger, *Oström. Reichsidee*, pp. 228-229.

¹⁵ O. Treitinger, *Oström. Reichsidee*, *passim*; F. Dölger, *Byzanz und die europäische Staatenwelt*, pp. 13 ff., 25-29, 159-170; E.H. Kantorowicz, *Laudes regiae* (Berkeley 1958) pp. 25-28, 65-69, 85-95; D.A. Miller, «The emperor and ritual : magic and harmony», *Byzantine Studies/Etudes byzantines* 6 (1979) pp. 112-129.

people».¹⁶ The ceremonies were intended to serve as «a transparent and freshly polished mirror, mounted in the heart of the palace, in which the prerogatives of the imperial power and the dignities of the senatorial order may worthily be viewed». The imperial power, being portrayed as possessing «order and measure», would serve as an icon of the workings of God's Universe, and would appear «more worthy of veneration to those beneath our hand, and thus more agreeable and more wonderful.»¹⁷ Great effort was devoted to fostering the impression that the ceremonies reflected the orderliness and stability of celestial and imperial power alike. The association of the emperor with Christ was heavily emphasized in such ceremonial as the Christmas meal : at the emperor's table reclined «twelve of the emperor's friends, on the model of the Apostles». Among these icons of the Apostles were two Bulgarian «friends», in the opening years of the 10th century.¹⁸

Anyone who had secured the imperial throne was supposed to have enjoyed God's approval, and to be «God-appointed».¹⁹ But especial veneration was due to those who had been born in the Purple Chamber of the Imperial Palace. There was a special ceremony for the celebration of the birth of a child to a reigning emperor. Prayers were offered to God and the Mother of God, beseeching their protection for the child.²⁰ In fact, the Porphyrogeniti were represented as being under the special protection of the Mother of God, the protectress of the city of Constantinople. This is indicated by an acclamation chanted on Ascension Day : «Mother of God the Word, fight alone together with the masters in the Purple, who have received from you the crown, because they have gained you for ever as an invincible shield in the Purple».²¹ One of the principal effects of the exaltation of the Porphyrogeniti was to convey the illusion of the antiquity and continuity of

¹⁶ Const. Porph., *De Cer.*, I, ed. Vogt, I, p. 1.

¹⁷ Const. Porph., *De Cer.*, I, ed. Vogt, I, p. 2.

¹⁸ Philotheos, *Kletorologion*, ed. in N. Oikonomides, *Les listes de préséance byzantines des IX et X siècles* (Paris 1972) pp. 166-167 and n. 141; see below, n. 157. Cf. O. Treitinger, *Oström. Reichsidee*, pp. 33-34, 120, 125-129.

¹⁹ O. Treitinger, *Oström. Reichsidee*, pp. 38-39, 47-48.

²⁰ Const. Porph., *De Cer.*, I, 51 (42), Vogt, II, pp. 24-25.

²¹ Const. Porph., *De Cer.*, I, 8, Vogt, I, p. 50; cf. *ibid.*, p. 52.

their «cult». The success of this propaganda is reflected clearly in the writings of Liudprand of Cremona. Twice he repeats the statement that the Purple Chamber was built by Constantine the Great who desired «that the successive rulers of his noble family should first see the light of day here, and that all the offspring of his line should be called by the glorious title of Porphyrogenitus.»²² Liudprand goes on to report and then refute the view held by «some people» that Constantine VII was descended from the first Constantine. But even he seems to have swallowed the notion of the extreme antiquity of the Purple Chamber and its mystique.

There can be no doubt that the imperial government deliberately fostered such a misconception. It similarly propagated the antiquity of the imperial regalia. According to Constantine VII's *De Administrando*, barbarians seeking gifts of imperial *stemma* and vestments were to be fobbed off with «clever pretexts». They were to be told that the robes of the emperors had been sent down by God to Constantine the Great, and that God had instructed him «not to clothe himself in them every day», but only for great public religious festivals. The barbarians were also to be told, quite falsely, that the regalia were, on God's instructions, stored in St Sophia. The great Constantine's name was associated with a church built two centuries after his death, and also with customs and objects which had nothing to do with him. For each refusal to vouchsafe regalia, Greek Fire or a marriage-alliance, a precept of God delivered to Constantine is invoked.²³ The Byzantines thus «traded on» the name of Constantine the Great, laying claim to greater antiquity for their customs than was, to their own knowledge, the case. Besides these «clever pretexts», acclamations and many facets of court ceremonial emphasized that each emperor was a «new Constantine». For example, a throne of Constantine stood in the Chrysotriklinion.²⁴ The cult of Constantine was varied and rich in its

²² Liudprand, *Antapodosis*, I, 7; III, 31, in *Opera*, ed. J. Becker, *MGH in usum schol.* (Hanover 1915¹) pp. 7-8, 88; trs. of Liudprand's *Works* by F. A. Wright (London 1930) pp. 35-36, 124. Our concern here is not whether Liudprand's statement is subsequently contradicted by his *Legatio*, ch. 15.

²³ Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus, *De Administrando Imperio*, ed. G. Moravcsik and R. J. H. Jenkins (Washington, D.C. 1967²) pp. 66-75; cf. R. J. H. Jenkins in *De Administrando Imperio: II, Commentary*, ed. R. J. H. Jenkins (London 1962) pp. 63-64.

²⁴ Const. Porph., *De Cer.*, II, 15, ed. J. J. Reiske, I (Bonn 1829) p. 587; N. Oikonomides, *Les listes de préséance byzantines*, pp. 274-275; O. Treitinger, *Oström. Reichsidee*, pp. 133; 131, n. 4.

associations.²⁵ But one basic feature of its propagation was to stress the continuity of the line of emperors, and the irremovability of the imperial power.

If Byzantium's continuity of regimes and institutions was partly illusory, its sheer survival-record was not. The Empire's ability to survive in itself implied divine approval and the consequent legitimacy of its rulers. The Byzantines were not slow to emphasize the Empire's antiquity and legitimacy when in dispute with barbarians, whose rulers and political structures were comparatively ephemeral. In 968, Byzantine officials told Liudprand, «that silly blockhead of a pope does not know that the sacred Constantine transferred to this city the imperial sceptre, the senate and all the Roman knighthood...».²⁶ In the mid-920s, Symeon of Bulgaria's assumption of the title of «*basileus* of the Romans» earned ridicule from Romanus I Lecapenus. He wrote to him that a title assumed by force is not permanent. «This is not possible, it is not possible even though you long and strive to beautify yourself like a jackdaw with borrowed plumes, which will fall away from you and reveal the name which your race fits you for.»²⁷ The Byzantine Empire's durability in comparison with its neighbours' transience is heavily stressed by Nicholas Mysticus in a letter sent to Symeon towards September, 917. Byzantium, he wrote, had once been besieged by the Persian army, who had attacked «just as you are threatening to do. But now they have been destroyed so that only the memory of their name survives, while the Roman Empire stands firm on its own foundation». The Avars' assault was likewise in vain and «not a vestige of their race survives.» So, too, with the great siege of Constantinople by the Saracens.²⁸ In another letter, Nicholas warned Symeon to expect

²⁵ Const. Porph., *De Cer.*, I, 1, 10, ed. Vogt, I, p. 1, 6, 7, 23-24, 67-68, 69. For the festival day of «the great and holy Constantine», see Const. Porph., *De Cer.*, II, 6, ed. J.J. Reiske, I, pp. 532-535; cf. O. Treitinger, *Oström. Reichsidee*, pp. 129-134; F. Dölger, *Byzanz und die europäische Staatenwelt*, pp. 161-162. For structures and artworks in the imperial palace complex attributed by Middle and Late Byzantine writers to Constantine I, see C. Mango, *The Brazen House* (Copenhagen 1959) pp. 22, 67-68, 108-109 and n. 7; cf. *idem*, *Byzantium. The Empire of New Rome*, p. 75.

²⁶ Liudprand, *Legatio*, ch. 51, in *Opera*, ed. Becker, p. 202; Wright, p. 265.

²⁷ Romanus Lecapenus, *Epistolai*, ep. 2, ed. I. Sakkelion, in *Deltion tēs Historikēs kai Ethnologikēs Hetairias tēs Hellados* 1 (1883-1884), repr. in *Izvori za B'lgarskata Istoriya* 8 (Sofia 1961) p. 307.

²⁸ Nicholas Mysticus, *Letters*, ed. and trs. R.J.H. Jenkins and L.G. Westerink (Washington, D.C. 1973) pp. 70-71. Cf. «since the Empire of the Romans arose, there is no nation that is able to boast

God's wrath at any attack upon «the Empire superior to (*epanô*) every authority on earth, the only one on earth which the Emperor of All has established.»²⁹ Similar sentiments concerning the futility of attacking the city of God, «never plundered and never captured, constituted from the beginning for Him and by Him», were voiced by John Mauropous in 1047.³⁰

In the same oration, Mauropous states that he has «often marvelled at the care of God, by which... this city... has been suddenly snatched unexpectedly from great dangers and saved against every human expectation».³¹ Similar amazement at the survival of the Empire and, specifically, of the City, against seemingly overwhelming perils is expressed by barbarian writers, such as the composers of the *Russian Primary Chronicle*. They explained it in two ways - either by accepting Byzantine propaganda concerning the divine protection for themselves and, especially, for their City, or by attributing the Byzantines' escapes from disaster to all too human wiles and trickery.

Byzantine propaganda was far from always carrying conviction. Writers of different nations commented scathingly on the Byzantines' lack of martial ardour and on the fact that they nonetheless often prevailed. Widukind of Corvey wrote that «almost from the beginning of the world the Greeks had been the lords of very many peoples, and they prevailed by tricks (*artibus*) over those whom they could not defeat by courage (*virtute*)».³² Very similar sentiments are expressed by the *Russian Primary Chronicle* in its account of Svyatoslav's campaigns in the Balkans. The account is very unreliable as a source for what actually happened in 969-971. For it represents Svyatoslav as es-

that it has not bowed its neck to it», *ibid.*, pp. 144-145.

²⁹ Nicholas Mysticus, *Letters*, ed. Jenkins and Westerink, pp. 48-49; cf. *ibid.*, pp. 108-109, 124-127, 130-133, 178-179.

³⁰ John Mauropous, Metropolitan of Euchaita, *Quae in Codice Vaticano Graeco 676 supersunt*, ed. P. De Lagarde, *Abhandlungen der Histor.-Philol. Classe der Königlichen Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen* 28 (1882), repr. Amsterdam, 1979, no. 186, p. 188.

³¹ John Mauropous, *Quae in Cod. Vatic. Gr. 676 supersunt*, no. 186, p. 187.

³² Widukind, *Rerum Gestarum Saxoniarum Libri Tres*, ed. P. Hirsch, *MGH in usum schol.* (Hanover 1935⁵) p. 148. Narrating the same episode as Widukind, Thietmar of Merseburg alludes to «the customary artfulness (*calliditate*)» of the Greeks: *Chronicon*, ed. R. Holtzmann, *MGH SS. nov. ser.* IX, (Berlin 1935) pp. 54-55, 126-127.

sententially victorious.³³ But it is invaluable as a key to how a northern writer *imagined* that Byzantine strategists and diplomats would reason, in the wake of defeat. «'What shall we do?'», the emperor is represented as asking his «boyars». The latter reply, «'Send him [Svyatoslav] gifts, and we will test whether he is enamoured of gold or silks'». And so they sent to him many gifts, gold and silks, and a wise man (*muzha mudra*) whom they instructed, «'Gaze upon his face, his look and his thoughts'». The mission failed. Svyatoslav unhelpfully averted his glance, would not negotiate, but retained the proffered gifts with the cry to his retainers, «'Keep (them)!'» So the Byzantines tried him out again, this time with gifts of weapons and armour. Svyatoslav's response was enthusiastic, and the Byzantine envoys reported back to the emperor that weaponry, not possessions, were his delight. The Byzantines concluded that «'This must be a ferocious man'», and decided that a full tribute would have to be paid. This fable, like the mythical tale of the poisoned food and wine offered to Oleg in 907, reflects the Russians' deep suspicion of Byzantine gifts and pretensions to peace and friendship, and their expectation that the Byzantines would employ «dirty tricks» to gain their ends.³⁴ The fable corresponds to actual practices of Byzantine diplomacy. For example, with the sudden offer of many gifts Alexius I sought to mollify and disarm so formidable an antagonist as Bohemond in 1097.³⁵

In describing another alleged ploy of the Byzantines - an attempt indirectly to discover the exact numbers of Svyatoslav's army - the *Russian Primary Chronicle* characterizes the Byzantines in words similar to Widukind of Corvey's: «the Greeks were tricking the Rus', for the Greeks are deceitful even to this day».³⁶ Yet such suspicion and contempt were laced with admiration. Even the above-quoted tale describes as «wise» the man sent to appraise Svyatoslav's personality. And in the Ipatievskaya manuscript of the *Primary Chronicle*, the word describing the Greeks as «deceitful» (*I'stivy*) has been replaced by the

³³ D. Obolensky, *Byz. Commonwealth*, p. 129.

³⁴ *Povest' Vremennykh Let* s. a. 971, 907, ed. D.S. Likhachev & V.P. Adrianova-Peretts, I (Moscow-Leningrad 1950) pp. 50-51, 24 (henceforth, *Povest'*); *Russian Primary Chronicle*, trs. S.H. Cross and O.P. Sherbowitz-Wetzor (Cambridge, Mass. 1953) pp. 88, 64 (henceforth, Cross).

³⁵ Anna Comnena, *Alexiad*, X, 11, Leib, II, p. 233; Sew., p. 328.

³⁶ *Povest'* s. a. 971, p. 50; Cross, p. 88.

positive term, «wise» (*mudri*).³⁷ This mixture, or oscillation, of attitudes should warn us from supposing that western and northern barbarians were wholly deaf to Byzantine propaganda about their Empire's benign stance of peace beneath divine protection.

Liudprand of Cremona offers the most striking instance of the mixed feelings of a single barbarian. Scarcely a negative general statement about Byzantium's State, society, Church or ideology is made in the *Antapodosis*. Even Romanus Lecapenus, who was «of humble stock, being of the Armenian race», was described in terms reminiscent of an acclamation: «praiseworthy... generous, humane, prudent and pious».³⁸ Romanus' grabbing of the imperial power is justified by a Scriptural quotation which might equally well have come from the pen of Nicholas Mysticus: «The Lord maketh poor and maketh rich... He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill, to set them among princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory».³⁹ Liudprand gushes forth: «The palace of Constantinople surpasses not only in beauty but also in strength any other fortification that I have set eyes on». Five of the seven pages comprising Book VI of Becker's edition are devoted to this palace, and to the ceremonial and gift-exchanges which went on there.⁴⁰ Liudprand's *Legatio*, relating his mission to Constantinople in 968 on behalf of Otto I, strikes the very opposite tone. He borrows from Juvenal the phrase «Graecia mendax», pours contempt on the «impotence» of the Byzantine armies, and ridicules the ceremonies and acclamations which glorified Nicephorus II Phocas.⁴¹ He alludes, with apparent irony, to acclamations concerning Nicephorus' love of peace⁴², and states that

³⁷ *Ipatievskaya Letopis'* s.a. 971, *Polnoe Sobranie Russkikh Letopisey*, II (repr. Moscow 1962) col. 57; D.S. Likhachev, *Tekstologiya* (Moscow 1962) p. 175.

³⁸ Liudprand, *Antapodosis*, III, 36, III, 22, in *Opera*, ed. J. Becker, *MGH in usum schol.*, pp. 91, 82; trs. of Liudprand's *Works* by F.A. Wright, pp. 127, 118.

³⁹ Liudprand, *Antapodosis*, III, 36, Becker, p. 91; Wright, p. 127; cf. *ibid.*, III, 35, Becker, pp. 90-91; Wright, p. 127; Nicholas Mysticus, *Letters*, ed. & trs. R.J.H. Jenkins & L.G. Westerink, pp. 108, 122, 126. Cf. O. Treitinger, *Oström. Reichsidee*, pp. 34-37, 47-48. Liudprand's quotation is from I Samuel, II, 7-8.

⁴⁰ Liudprand, *Antapodosis*, V, 21, VI, 5-10, Becker, pp. 142, 154-158; Wright, pp. 190, 207-212.

⁴¹ Liudprand, *Legatio*, chs. 57, 29, 10, 28, in *Opera*, ed. Becker, pp. 207, 191, 181, 190; Wright, pp. 270, 252, 240-241, 251.

⁴² There is a lacuna in the text at the point where Liudprand seems about to allude ironically to accla-

to hail a fool as «wise» or a sinner as «holy» is false praise.

One should not conclude from this that the impact of the court ceremonial upon Liudprand had been fleeting and superficial. Nor should one follow those modern historians who interpret Liudprand's *Legatio* as a sign of the parting of the ways between «East» and «West». It was, after all, written less than 10 years after the *Antapodosis* with its mawkish admiration for Byzantium⁴³: a short time for the development of global fissures! Liudprand's concern with the seating arrangements at dinners in the imperial palace, and his fury at being placed only fifteenth from the emperor and, on another occasion, at being ranked below a Bulgarian envoy, involuntarily attest the significance which he attached to the ceremonial. Indeed, Liudprand's very mission in 968 indicates the fascination which the court and the notions which its ritual fostered exerted upon barbarians. For Liudprand's objective was to gain as bride for Otto I's son not just any Byzantine princess but, specifically, a Porphyrogenita, a girl born in the porphyry-lined chamber of the imperial palace. Liudprand had enthused about the Purple Chamber in his *Antapodosis*, a work which was begun in, and circulated in, Ottonian Germany.⁴⁴ The concept of «Porphyrogenitus» was well enough known in 10th century Germany for it to be invoked in justification of Duke Henry's revolt against his elder brother, Otto I, in that Henry, but not Otto, had been born during the reign of their father Henry the Fowler. This idea is alien to Germanic succession customs, and its likeliest source is Byzantium.⁴⁵ In

mations concerning Nicephorus' love of peace: *Legatio*, ch. 28, Becker, p. 190; Wright, p. 251. See O. Treitinger, *Oström. Reichsidee*, p. 119.

⁴³ J. Becker's *Einleitung* to his ed. of Liudprand, ix, xi. The *Legatio* was ostensibly addressed to Otto I and his son, and written before he had met and talked with Otto. Whether this was a literary conceit or not, the work was plainly written in the months following his return, and before Nicephorus' death (December 11, 969), or even the outcome of the expedition of 28 ships led by a eunuch, were known to him: *Legatio* ch. 62, 30, Becker, pp. 210, 191; Wright, pp. 274, 253.

⁴⁴ J. Becker, *op. cit.*, ix, xxv, xxxii and n. 3, xxxiii; *Legatio*, ch. 11, 19, 7, 15, Becker, pp. 181, 185, 180, 184; Wright, pp. 241, 246, 239, 244; *Antapodosis*, I, 6-7, III, 30-31, Becker pp. 7-8, 88; Wright, pp. 35-36, 124. See above, p. 247. Liudprand's citation of the marriage of Peter of Bulgaria to Maria Lekapena as a precedent for the concession of a Porphyrogenita to the far mightier Otto shows how closely, and jealously, barbarians followed one another's marriage ties with Byzantium: *Legatio*, ch. 16, Becker, p. 184; Wright, p. 244.

⁴⁵ O. Treitinger, *Oström. Reichsidee*, p. 58 and n. 53; W. Ohnsorge, «Die Heirat Kaiser Ottos II mit

968, Otto had only one living son, and the son had been born when Otto was already on the throne. So he was, in a sense, «Porphyrogenitus». But his smooth succession could not be taken for granted : hence Otto I's anxiety to wed him to a princess suffused with the mystique and legitimacy of the famous Purple Chamber. A similar concern with the succession, and attention to Byzantine ceremonial, underlies Otto's designation and instigation of the coronation of his son as co-emperor, at Rome in 967.⁴⁶

So Liudprand's mission is in itself an indication of the allure of the mystique of the imperial palace and its residents. His *Legatio* represents an attempt to vindicate the failure of the mission, to protest his loyalty to the Saxon house, and to spur on hostilities against Nicephorus II Phocas. As was noted by J.N. Sutherland, Liudprand's exhortation is mainly directed against Nicephorus, as the man responsible for his failure to procure a Porphyrogenita for Otto II.⁴⁷ Liudprand even expresses the hope that God may soon remove Nicephorus from the throne, and that he may «be submitted to his lords, the emperors Basil and Constantine». Liudprand's venom is aimed at Nicephorus, rather than at these emperors. He refers sympathetically to «the two little emperors, formerly his lords, but now subjected to him», who were forced to sit to his left, and on thrones «far lower than» his.⁴⁸ They, unlike Nicephorus, are designated as bearing the rank of

der byzantinerin Theophano (972)», *Braunschweigisches Jahrbuch* 54 (1973) p. 27; R. Staats, *Theologie der Reichskrone. Ottonische «Renovatio Imperii» im Spiegel einer Insignie. Monographien zur Geschichte des Mittelalters* 13 (1976) p. 114. Anna Comnena's claim that the name of porphyrogenitus was «world-famous» was not wildly exaggerated: *Alexiad.* VI, 8, Leib, II, pp. 60-61; Sew. p. 196.

⁴⁶ M. Uhlirz, «Zu dem Mitkaisertum der Ottonen», *BZ* 50 (1957) p. 384; W. Ohnsorge, *Abendland und Byzanz* (Darmstadt 1958) pp. 37, 267-268, 271; *idem*, «Heirat Kaiser Ottos», pp. 26-27, 31; R. Staats, *Reichskrone*, pp. 40-41, 43, 129-130, 139-140; K. Leyser, *Rule and conflict in an early medieval society: Ottonian Saxony* (London 1979) pp. 26, 29-30.

⁴⁷ J.N. Sutherland, «The mission to Constantinople in 968 and Liudprand of Cremona», *Traditio* 31 (1975) p. 81; on Liudprand's aim in writing the *Legatio*, see *ibid.*, pp. 61-62, 75. Liudprand's extraordinary egotism, and the highly personal nature of his disappointment at the failure of his mission are also noted by M. Rentschler, *Liudprand von Cremona*, in *Frankfurter Vissenschaftliche Beiträge. Kulturwissenschaftliche Reihe* 14 (1981) pp. 26-27, 29-30, 60.

⁴⁸ Liudprand, *Legatio*, ch. 41, 3, 10, Becker, pp. 197-198, 177, 181; Wright, pp. 260, 237, 241; J.N. Sutherland, *Mission*, pp. 66, 81.

*imperator*⁴⁹. In his antipathy towards a usurper, Liudprand backtracks on the statements, based on the idea of Providential Kingship, which he had made concerning Romanus Lecapenus.⁵⁰ But such vacillation between accepting God's choice for the throne and veneration of the Porphyrogeniti corresponds to the Byzantines' own ambivalence. For all its broad satire and ridicule of some Byzantine customs and pretensions to political seniority, the *Legatio*'s polemics are targeted quite narrowly on the person of Nicephorus Phocas and his officials.⁵¹ They do not challenge systematically the legitimacy of Byzantium's *imperium* as a continuation of Rome's. In fact both the *Legatio* and the 968 mission itself bear involuntary witness to the mystique of the Purple Chamber and to the legitimacy of the imperial status of those born in it, «the two little emperors», Basil and Constantine, and their sister, whose hand he was seeking for the thirteen-year-old Otto II.

If Liudprand illustrates the effect wrought by court ritual on even the sharpest and most critical minds of the barbarian West, he also offers a direct, eye-witness, answer to the questions of why Byzantium's stance towards its neighbours was primarily defensive, and why diplomacy was usually preferred to war as a means of conserving the Empire's position: «the city of Constantinople,... the new Rome, is situated among the most ferocious peoples. To its north there live the Hungarians, the Pechenegs, the Khazars, the Rus' (whom we call by the different name of Northmen), and, living all too close to them, the

⁴⁹ Nicephorus is termed *imperator* almost exclusively in direct or indirect speech which is reported by Liudprand: *Legatio*, ch. 14, 19, 35, 37, 38, 39, 40, 47, 50, 51, 53, 54, 56, Becker, pp. 183, 186, 193, 194-196, 200-201, 202-204, 206; Wright, pp. 243, 246, 255, 256-257, 258, 259, 263-264, 265, 266, 267, 268, 269. Liudprand once ironically refers to Nicephorus as *imperator sanctus* and once terms him *imperator* in neutral terms: ch. 20, 19, Becker, pp. 186, 185; Wright, pp. 247, 246.

⁵⁰ See above, p.

⁵¹ Liudprand does raise wider issues, such as the status of the see of Otranto and even the subordination of Constantinople's Patriarchate to the Roman see, and he proposes the synodal trial and anathematization of Patriarch Polyeuct, and the trial of Phocas, whom he holds responsible for Polyeuct's action. But his overriding aim is to find fresh *casus belli* against Phocas: *Legatio*, ch. 62, Becker, pp. 208-210; Wright, pp. 273-274. Cf. J. Sutherland, *Mission*, p. 81. M. Rentschler, while stressing that Liudprand's declarations and aspirations do not precisely reflect Otto I's aims, argues that his reaction to Constantinople foreshadows that of 11th century Westerners: *Liudprand von Cremona*, pp. 28, 30, 46-47.

Bulgarians».⁵² Earlier in his *Antapodosis*, Liudprand has remarked upon the proximity of the Bulgarians to the Byzantines, and elsewhere he reports the obnoxious habits of another people who lived near the Byzantines, the Hungarians: «They massacre populations, and drink down the blood of their victims, so as to be feared all the more». They are further characterized as «a people thirsting for slaughter, greedy for war.»⁵³ Western writers were appalled at the outrages of the Hungarians but, as Runciman once observed, «the West had no sense of proportion; it did not know the Pechenegs». These nomads were even fiercer than the Hungarians⁵⁴.

By a geographical accident, the most advanced and orderly nation in Christendom found itself living cheek by jowl with exceedingly primitive, savage, peoples, many of whom were still leading a nomadic, or semi-nomadic, way of life. Their extreme mobility⁵⁵, as well as their periodic migrations, meant that Byzantium had to reckon with kaleidoscopic variations of «neighbours», rather than only with the peoples living on its land borders. A distant drought, disease of livestock, or feud could trigger off a chain reaction across the steppes. Of this the Byzantines were well aware.⁵⁶ The Byzantine writers' descriptions of the peoples who hurtled at them from the steppes tally with 10th century Western writers' descriptions of the Hungarians. They are therefore more substantive than mere rhetorical *topoi*. John Mauropous wrote of the Pechenegs in the 1040s: «They are disgusting and unclean in their way of life... and they are at the same time most dexterous and most frightful at putting to the sword with murderous

⁵² Liudprand, *Antapodosis*, I, 11, Becker, p. 9, Wright, p. 38.

⁵³ Liudprand, *Antapodosis*, I, 5; II, 2, 4, Becker, pp. 6, 36-37, 38; Wright, pp. 35, 69, 70. Whether Anna's claim that the Cumans longed to gorge on human flesh and blood is purely figurative is unclear. She describes the «Manichaeans» in the same terms: *Alexiad.* X, 2; VI, 14, Leib, II, pp. 191, 82; Sew., pp. 297, 212.

⁵⁴ S. Runciman, *Romanus Lecapenus*, p. 108; D. Obolensky, *Byz. Commonwealth*, pp. 178-180.

⁵⁵ The speed of the «Scyths'» movements was noted by Anna Comnena, *Alexiad.* VII, 6, Leib, II, p. 107; Sew., p. 231; cf. John Scylitzes, *Synopsis Historiarum*, ed. I. Thurn (Berlin-New York 1973) p. 461.

⁵⁶ For mentions of nomads' invasions of Byzantine territory as having been precipitated by attacks upon these nomads by their own neighbours or by rival clans, see Anna Comnena, *Alexiad.* III, 8, Leib, I, p. 127; Sew., p. 122; VI, 14, Leib, II, p. 81; Sew., p. 212; Scylitzes, *Synopsis*, ed. Thurn, p. 455.

hands whatever has fallen into them». He complained that they had no fear at all of death : «They regard killing as a laughing matter, just as if it were something straightforward and everyday». ⁵⁷ Likewise, a generation later, Theophylact of Ochrid complained that the Pechenegs despised and abhorred the prospect of a quiet, trouble-free, life, and that they esteemed as the greatest warrior the man who proved himself most barbaric. ⁵⁸ The steppe-nomads were expert horsemen, almost born in the saddle, and so inevitably proficient in cavalry warfare. Of this, too, the Byzantines showed awareness. Michael Attaleiates observed of the Pechenegs that they «spend their entire lives living by the sabre, the arrow and the bow, and before every other craft or science practise that of the armed incursion». Likewise, the Uzes «were brought up on war and battles, and had their right hands ready for conflict and devastation». ⁵⁹

To make matters worse for the Byzantines, the manpower of the steppe peoples far exceeded their own. This problem was compounded by the fact that every able-bodied steppe nomad was a warrior, «with a natural flair for fighting». ⁶⁰ Every Byzantine writer who describes the nomads emphasizes their vast numbers. Even when allowance is made for literary convention, the fact remains that the Byzantines' reserves of military manpower fell far short of the nomads'. ⁶¹ These numbered, in Theophylact's words, «more than the bees in springtime, and nobody knows how many thousands or tens of thousands of them there

⁵⁷ John Mauropous, *Quae in Cod. Vatic. Gr. 676 supersunt*, ed. De Lagarde, no. 182, pp. 144, 145. The nomads' indifference to the death of themselves or others is likewise noted by Psellus, I, *Scripta Minora*, p. 18.

⁵⁸ P. Gautier, *Discours de Théophylacte*, pp. 112, 123.

⁵⁹ Michael Attaleiates, *Historia*, ed. I. Bekker (Bonn, 1853) pp. 30, 84. On the Turkic steppe-nomads' skills at mounted archery, see W. Kaegi, «The contribution of archery to the Turkish conquest of Anatolia», *Speculum* 39 (1964) pp. 103, 108.

⁶⁰ Anna Comnena, *Alexiad*, VII, 3, Leib, II, p. 97; Sew., p. 224. «They tolerate extremes of heat and cold and every kind of deprivation, being nomads»: Pseudo-Maurice, *Strategicon*, ed. H. Mihăescu, pp. 268-269.

⁶¹ On the eastern frontier, the Byzantines were so short of military manpower that they were even ready to provide military holdings to *stratiôtai* who, after fleeing to the Moslems, returned once more to the Empire: G.G. Litavrin, *Vizantiyskoe obshchestvo i gosudarstvo v X-XI vv.* (Moscow 1977) p. 245.

are». ⁶² Psellus hints at the futility of squandering Byzantium's limited reserves of manpower in battles with teeming hordes of nomads. In a letter addressed to Emperor Isaac Comnenus, he expresses the hope that «none of those under your command should fall in war. For with how many barbarian heads would you equate one Byzantine head, whether it be that of javelin-thrower, stone-thrower, herald, or trumpeter? How much better is it that not one of our men should fall in battle, and that all the barbarians should be overcome by peaceful means?» ⁶³

No really formidable natural barrier separated the Byzantines from their northern neighbours. They were doomed to co-exist with peoples whose values differed markedly from their own. John Scylitzes observed how a steppe-nomad could rise from obscurity solely by dint of martial qualities. The Pechenegs «were immensely fervent admirers of Kegen because of his great courage and his genius for war». ⁶⁴ The Byzantines are generally supposed to have been unenthusiastic towards bloodshed and, as was noted above, their propaganda stressed their ruler's love of peace. But in fact *any* people which did not give pride of place to the martial virtues was likely to stand at a disadvantage to the nomads. It was a disadvantage suffered by most sedentary, Mediterranean, civilizations in their dealings with warlike northern peoples.

Liudprand of Cremona drew attention to two great assets of the Byzantines. After listing their sundry neighbours, he states that they «far surpass these peoples in both wealth (*divitiae*) and wisdom (*sapientia*)». ⁶⁵ Liudprand saw the Empire's stance as essentially defen-

⁶² P. Gautier, *Discours de Théophylacte*, pp. 112, 123. That Theophylact's words are not merely rhetorical is suggested by the Khazar Khagan Joseph's description of the Pechenegs in the mid-10th century as being «as numerous as the sand which is infinite in the sea»: P.K. Kokovtsov, *Evreysko-khazarskaya perepiska v Xv.* (Leningrad 1932) p. 102.

⁶³ Psellus, *Scripta Minora*, ed. E. Kurtz and F. Drexler, II (Milan 1941) p. 181.

⁶⁴ Scylitzes, ed. Thurn, p. 455.

⁶⁵ Liudprand, *Antapodosis*, I, 11, Becker, p. 10; Wright, p. 38. Liudprand's representation of the proportionate wealth of Byzantium and its Moslem neighbours is the opposite of the truth. It is, perhaps, a sign of how Constantinople's splendours could blind visiting foreigners to realities. The qualities of «learning», «intelligence» and «prudence» are, of course, extolled by Constantine VII as being essential for an emperor: *De Administrando Imperio*, ed. G. Moravcsik and R.J.H. Jenkins, pp. 48-49. Cf. G. Buckler, *Anna Comnena*, pp. 138-139, 141.

sive, and connected the capital's elaborate security precautions with the threats from other peoples. There were nightly curfews «in order that they may not be set upon by surprise (*opprimantur*) by neighbouring peoples». Liudprand also put his finger on the two qualities with which a sedentary civilization could most easily defend itself against «the most ferocious peoples». In fact, Byzantine diplomacy consisted in the skilful coordination of these two qualities. «Wealth», in the form of presents, subsidies, bribes, tribute and elaborate court ceremonial, was in the service of «wisdom». The Byzantines themselves did not isolate, or apply a name to, this combination of qualities. But the combination amounts to a policy which took into account the state of almost continuous crisis in which Byzantium was placed by its geographical position.⁶⁶ It was cheaper than a heavy reliance on armed force would have been.⁶⁷ And, because diplomacy could be directed by the emperor himself with the aid of only a small staff of full-time officials, it obviated the expense and inefficiency of the imperial administrative system.

There were two basic elements in the conduct of Byzantine diplomacy : delay in responding militarily to aggression from a barbarian people and procrastination in negotiating with them; and, secondly, careful surveillance of the barbarians, and speed in responding to changes in their power structures. At first sight, these two characteristics look so contradictory that one may doubt whether there was any coherent policy behind Byzantine diplomacy. But in fact they are the maxims of the military handbooks transposed to a wider sphere. These are, in essence : «Do nothing, unless you really have to. But watch the enemy's moves carefully, so that you can strike effectively if action is unavoidable».⁶⁸ The use of force was not ruled out. It was reserved for occasions when other means of thwarting the aggressor had either failed, or placed him in a position where he was now highly vulnerable.

⁶⁶ The peculiarly exposed position of Byzantium was stressed by G.G. Litavrin, *Vizantiyskoe obshchestvo*, p. 258; D. Obolensky, *Byzantine Commonwealth*, pp. 16, 26. The Byzantines' «pessimistic» outlook, even in their 10th century heyday, was noted by C. Mango, *Byzantium*, pp. 211-212.

⁶⁷ Cf. D. Obolensky, *Principles*, p. 46.

⁶⁸ See above, p. 269. A.J. Toynbee (*Constantine Porph.*, pp. 110-112) gives a concise account of «dogging and pouncing» tactics.

This policy owed less to the principle of non-violence^{68A} than to the calculation that it was most efficacious in dispersing or destroying barbarian attackers.

What is the evidence for a policy of «Do nothing» towards Byzantium's northern and western neighbours ? By its very nature, such a policy is hard to detect : how to tell when it is deliberate and voluntary, rather than the effect of military impotence and disarray ? It must be admitted that some of our most striking instances of the efficacy of «Do nothing» come from situations when the Byzantines, having suffered crushing military defeats, had no means of taking military action. Nonetheless, a rationale does seem discernible in their handling of their neighbours, particularly those who were steppe nomads. They refrained from maintaining a frontier force capable of excluding invaders. Instead, they relied on «bricks and mortar» - on fortresses and fortified settlements which assured them a modicum of control in areas awash with barbarians. This modicum was secure for, as Psellus noted, the steppe nomads knew nothing about fortifications, being unable to build palisades or to dig ditches around their camps.⁶⁹ They were therefore unlikely to be proficient in siege warfare. On the rare occasions when the Byzantines risked a major campaign against western or northern neighbours, *tagmata* from the armies of the East had to be deployed there. Even after the creation of a Domestic of the Schools, and of a *stratopedarchês*, specifically for the West, the Eastern Domestic of the Schools continued to be called the «Great Domestic» (*Megas Domestikos*) even on official documents.⁷⁰ The Byzantines continued to use the Bulgarians as a buffer against other barbarians after their subjugation of Bulgaria, as they had done during the reign of Tsar' Peter (927-969). The 10th century Byzantine chroniclers only bothered to record those Magyar raids which penetrated through Bul-

^{68A} That some writers from the late 11th century onwards prized straightforward soldierly virtues highly is shown by A.P. Kazhdan, «Sotsial'nye vozzreniya Mikhaila Attaliata», *ZRV* 17 (1976), pp. 5-6, 15, 39-41.

⁶⁹ Psellus, *Chronographia*, ed. Renauld, II, pp. 125-126; Sew., pp. 318-319. The Pechenegs' lack of strongholds of their own was also noted by Al-Bakri, referring to the situation in the 9th century: C.A. Macartney, *The Magyars in the Ninth Century* (Cambridge 1930) p. 190.

⁷⁰ N. Oikonomides, «L'évolution de l'organisation administrative de l'empire byzantin au XI siècle (1025-1118)», *Travaux et Mémoires* 6 (1976), p. 142.

garia to Byzantine territory.⁷¹ It is likely that there were other Magyar raids on Bulgaria, which failed to catch the Byzantine chroniclers' attention. In fact, the Byzantines did not always record Magyar incursions deep into their own territory. Liudprand mentions one such raid for the 960s.⁷² It must be emphasized that these occurred at a time when Byzantine power was at its zenith, and when Nicephorus II Phocas was marshalling formidable armies for campaigns against the Saracens. The imperial government presumably left its western frontier permeable from choice, rather than necessity.

An apparent obstacle to this generalization may actually serve to confirm it. As is well-known, the Byzantines were seriously alarmed by the Russians' attempt to establish themselves on the Lower Danube in 969-971.⁷³ After defeating the Russians, John Tzimiskes set about creating a «hard», impermeable frontier along the Danube, so as to prevent the Russians from intruding there again. It is probable, if not certain, that a «Mesopotamia of the West» was instituted on the Lower Danube as a militaro-administrative unit.⁷⁴ In any case, the evidence of the *Tacticon Oikonomides* may be coupled with that from excavations of various forts and strongpoints to indicate that the Byzantines intended to «seal» the Danube frontier by means of a considerable military force. The barracks excavated at Dinogetia, and the fortified port on the island of Păcuilui lui Soare, are extensive.⁷⁵ In c. 987, the

⁷¹ S. Runciman, *Romanus Lecapenus*, pp. 105-107; N. Oikonomides, «Vardariotes-W.l.nd.r - V.n.nd.r.», *Südost-Forschungen* 32 (1973) pp. 6-7, repr. in his *Documents et études sur les institutions de Byzance* (London 1976).

⁷² Liudprand, *Legatio*, ch. 45, Becker, p. 199; Wright, p. 262. See G. Moravcsik, *Byzantium and the Magyars* (Budapest 1970) p. 59.

⁷³ D. Obolensky, *Byz. Commonwealth*, pp. 128-129; H.R. Ellis Davidson, *The Viking Road to Byzantium* (London 1976) pp. 143, 206.

⁷⁴ N. Oikonomides, «Recherches sur l'histoire du Bas-Danube aux X-XI siècles: la Mésopotamie de l'Occident», *RESEE* 3 (1965), pp. 57 ff.; *idem*, *Les listes de préséance byzantines des IX et X siècles*, p. 363 and n. 409; P. Diaconu, *Les Petchénègues au Bas-Danube* (Bucharest 1970) pp. 24-25; A.A. Bolsacov-Ghimpu, «Localization de sites d'époque romaine et byzantine dans la zone du Bas-Danube», *RESEE* 11 (1973) pp. 558-559; V. Tapkova-Zaimova, *Dolna Dunav-granichna zona na vizantiyskiya zapad* (Sofia 1976) pp. 43, 69.

⁷⁵ I interpret as soldiers' living quarters the rectangular annex built between two existing towers in the walls of the fort at Dinogetia; see I. Barnea, «Dinogetia et Noviodunum. Deux villes byzantines du

Russians were converted to Christianity and Vladimir Svyatoslavich became an ally of the Byzantines. The uniquely menacing threat of Russian landpower and seapower thus receded. Thereupon, the Byzantines seem to have accorded a lower priority to their northern frontier. Parts of the fortresses were abandoned, and although the civilian population grew in numbers, the actual garrisons' size seems to have been small.⁷⁶ Even if the Lower Danube was partially or wholly lost to Byzantium during the earlier stages of the Bulgarian revolt, the area was under Byzantine control from c. 1000 onwards, and substantial frontier forces could have been reconstituted.

There is, however, no evidence that after his final subjugation of the Bulgarians, Basil II reconstituted a «hard» northern frontier. The area of the Danube was supervised by a governor (*stratêgos*) residing at Dristra (Silistra). The number of Byzantine, salary-earning, full-time, soldiers stationed on the Danube or in the Danube plain seems to have been small. Extra military manpower seems to have been supplied by the local inhabitants, whose way of life was still at least partly martial, but whose interests or religion predisposed them favourably towards the Empire.⁷⁸ Cecaumenos' *Strategicon* indicates that some mid-11th century commanders on the Danube were *akritai*, in other words, local notables with their own military following, who

Bas-Danube » RESEE 9 (1971), p. 353. On the fortress at Păcuil lui Soare and the adjoining wharf, which is over 40m. long, see E. Condurachi, I. Barnea, P. Diaconu, «Nouvelles recherches sur le Limes byzantin du Bas-Danube aux IX-XI siècles», *Proceedings of the XIII International Congress of Byzantine Studies* (London 1967) pp. 185-186; P. Diaconu and D. Vilceanu, *Păcuil lui Soare*, I (Bucharest 1972) pp. 24-25, 38, 52-53, line-drawing reconstruction of wharf, fig. 13 on p. 40.

⁷⁶ I. Barnea, *Dinogetia et Noviodunum*, pp. 354-355; P. Diaconu and D. Vilceanu, *Păcuil lui Soare*, pp. 43, 45, 54, 59 and n. 4; D. Obolensky, *Byz. Commonwealth*, pp. 212-213.

⁷⁷ V. Tapkova-Zaimova, *Dunav-granich. zona*, p. 59. Anna Comnena asserts that Tzimisces himself relied partly on transplanted people to serve as «battleworthy forces against these nomadic Scyths» around Philippopolis: *Alexiad.* XIV, 8, Leib, III, p. 180; Sew., p. 465. They seem, in effect, to have served as a buffer for the towns of Thrace.

⁷⁸ Such were the people living along the Danube whom Attaleiates termed *mixobarbaroi* (ed. Bekker, p. 204). Their characteristic features lay, in my view, primarily in religious adherence to Byzantine Orthodoxy and, to a lesser extent, in cultural affinities with the Byzantines. To associate the term with any one ethnic group is ill-advised. See N.-S. Tanaşoca, «Les mixobarbares et les formations politiques paristriennes du XI siècle», *Revue roumaine d'histoire* 12 (1973) no. 1, pp. 64-66, 73-74; V. Tapkova-Zaimova, *Dunav-granich. zona*, pp. 126-130.

were basically self-supporting. This indication tallies with Scylitzes' statement that the outstandingly able Pecheneg warlord Kegen was entrusted with the defence of three forts on the Danube, and «many stades of land» for, presumably, the pasturing of his people's animals. His people served under him.⁷⁹ This policy of employing borderers has been criticized, and interpreted as a sign of weakness and disarray.⁸⁰ However, not all borderers were inefficient or disloyal. Kegen was, in fact, overzealous in the Empire's service, constantly raiding and harrying the Pechenegs north of the Danube.⁸¹ In any case, the most noteworthy feature of this policy of a minimal military commitment to the northern approaches is that it seems to have been adopted at a time of Byzantine strength. Basil II seems voluntarily to have allowed the Danube bases to contract, or to be abandoned, and preferred to use his armies elsewhere, campaigning in the Western Balkans, Caucasia and (prospectively) Sicily. He appears to have shared the assumption of his tenth century predecessors and eleventh century successors that the frontier against the nomads could not be «hard». Only the appearance of a different kind of northerner, the Russians, had brought about the temporary revision of this assumption.

If this was the Byzantines' general assumption, one would expect to find that their towns were well-fortified - the «bricks and mortar» of their policy. That Constantinople itself was impregnable is well-known, and was a fact that Byzantine diplomats themselves were keen to publicize.⁸² Less attention has been paid to the fact that the provincial towns and settlements of Thrace, Macedonia and Hellas were also well-fortified. A systematic survey would be needed to ascertain when these fortifications were built or rebuilt, and why. For our purposes, it is sufficient to note that the Byzantines do not seem to have dispensed

⁷⁹ Cecaumenos, *Strategicon*, ed. and Russian trs. G.G. Litavrin (Moscow, 1972) pp. 150-151 and n. 237; Scyl., ed. Thurn, p. 456; E. Stănescu, «La crise du Bas-Danube au cours de la seconde moitié du XI siècle», *ZRV* 9 (1966) pp. 55, 66-69; V. Tapkova-Zaimova, *Dunav-granich. zona*, pp. 87-88. On foreigners installed as warriors on Byzantine lands, see H. Ahrweiler, «Recherches sur l'administration de l'empire byzantin aux IX-XI siècles», *Bulletin de Correspondance Hellénique* 84 (1960) pp. 32-33.

⁸⁰ G.G. Litavrin, *Viz. obshchestvo*, pp. 254-255.

⁸¹ Scyl., ed. Thurn, p. 457.

⁸² D. Obolensky, *Principles*, p. 60; A.J. Toynbee, *Constantine Porphy.* pp. 216-218.

with the fortification of their population centres or the maintenance of fortresses during their 10th and 11th century heyday. On the contrary, fortifications were maintained, and there is some evidence of rebuilding. For example, the levelling of the Hellenistic town-walls and the construction of new, thicker ones seems to have occurred at Philippi towards the end of the 10th century. At the same time, the walls of Philippi's acropolis were rebuilt, and a keep, storehouses and water cisterns were built, enabling the acropolis to withstand a lengthy siege even if the town itself were to be overwhelmed.⁸³ An inscription points to Nicephorus II's reign as the likely date for all this building work.⁸⁴ In a survey of Eastern Macedonia, fourteen fortified towns have been noted. The majority seem to have enclosed the settlement as well as the citadel within fortified walls. Most of them are first mentioned in literary sources as *kastra* in the late 10th or early 11th century.⁸⁵ These sources are connected with Mount Athos, and it would thus be rash to conclude that all these places first became *kastra* in the 10th or 11th century. Nearly all of them lie on, or on the approaches to, the great military road, the Via Egnatia, or the key thoroughfares along the Strymon or from Thessalonica to Athos.⁸⁶ It is nonetheless striking that the Byzantines should have thought fit to build or maintain numerous fortified population-centres in their European provinces in the 10th and 11th centuries. The fact that large military bases such as Philippopolis and Adrianople were massively fortified is perhaps unremarkable. More notable is the fact that a town with «many markets» but of middling size, such as Viza (Bizoe), was fortified. Viza had no obvious strategic significance, and was not directly connected with any of the great military roads.⁸⁷

⁸³ P. Lemerle, *Philippes et la Macédoine Orientale à l'époque chrétienne et byzantine* (Paris 1945) pp. 149-151.

⁸⁴ P. Lemerle, *Philippes*, p. 148.

⁸⁵ J. Lefort, «En Macédoine orientale au X siècle: habitat rural, communes et domaines», *Occident et Orient au X siècle, Actes du IX Congrès de la Société des Historiens médiévistes de l'Enseignement supérieur public* (Paris 1979) pp. 253-254.

⁸⁶ J. Lefort, *Macédoine*, p. 254.

⁸⁷ S.N. Lishev, *B'lgarskiyat srednovekoven grad* (Sofia 1970) p. 59; E. Eickhoff, *Friedrich Barbarossa im Orient* (Tübingen 1977) p. 67; P. Tivčev, «Sur les cités byzantines aux XI-XII siècles», *Byzantinobulgarica* 1 (1962) pp. 150, 153-154, 156, 170. For instances of country folk fleeing to «the towns and strongpoints» in the area of Pamphylia in Thrace in 1087, and fleeing «with their wagons»

Still more striking is the case of Çorlu (Tzouroulos). Çorlu is situated approximately 80 miles west of Constantinople. Anna Comnena describes it as «a village» (*kômê*) and «a very small town» (*polichnion*). It was therefore unable to accomodate all of Alexius Comnenus' army when he led it there during operations against the Pechenegs in 1090. Yet the village possessed not only natural defences from its position on top of a steep hill, but also battlements with parapets. These ramparts were sturdy and high enough to be used by Alexius for an elaborate stratagem. Its essence was that the chassises of wagons were hung out over the ramparts by ropes and, at a given moment, were dropped and hurtled down the hill at the Pechenegs, «cutting off their horses' legs like mowers in a harvest field».⁸⁸ The inhabitants of the village had presumably taken shelter behind the ramparts, concentrating their livestock and wagons there upon the approach of the nomads. The fortification of settlements made it possible to limit the amount of harm done to animals and agricultural equipment, denying the former to the enemy. A variant of this strategy seems to have been practised by the Byzantines in 1097. For, judging by the anonymous *Gesta Francorum*, they made provisions available to the Crusaders only at their walled towns, and they «would not allow any of our men to go inside the walls of the cities (*civitatum*)».⁸⁹

There is also evidence of fortified towns in 11th and 12th century Bulgaria. In part, they served as garrison towns from which the Byzantine authorities could watch and intimidate the native Bulgarian population. But the fortifications also served to shelter craftsmen's workshops, market-places and fairs. The ample evidence which Idrisi gives of fortified, economically vibrant towns in 12th century Bulgaria⁹⁰ tallies with archaeological evidence of the growth of new, or newly for-

to Rousion in 1091, see Anna Comnena, *Alexiad.* VII, 1, 9; Leib, II, pp. 87, 119; Sew., pp. 217, 240. On Viza, see Villehardouin, *La Conquête de Constantinople*, ed. E. Faral, II (Paris 1939) pp. 200, 241; trs. by M.R.B. Shaw, *Chronicles of the Crusades* (Harmondsworth 1963) pp. 129, 140. In the theme of Hellas such Middle Byzantine fortifications as there were tended to encompass whole population-areas, in contrast to the small citadels of the Frankish Occupation period: J. Koder and F. Hild, *Hellas und Thessalia. Tabula Imperii Byzantini*, ed. H. Hunger, I (Vienna 1976) pp. 105-106.

⁸⁸ Anna Comnena, *Alexiad.* II, 4, 6; VII, 11; Leib, I, pp. 73, 81; II, 123-126; Sew., pp. 81, 87, 242-244; *PRE 2 Reihe*, VII (Stuttgart 1948) col. 2012.

⁸⁹ *Gesta Francorum et aliorum Hierosolimitanorum*, ed. R. Hill (repr. Oxford 1979) pp. 9-11.

⁹⁰ S.N. Lishev, *B'lgarsk. grad.* pp. 15-16, 18, 21-22, 56-58, 61-62.

tified, towns during the years of Byzantine dominion. For example, at Varna new walls were built around part of the town, and within this fortified area stood a citadel. Lovech developed as a fortress containing an elaborate network of streets in the 12th century. Pernik's massive fortifications circumscribed the entire settled area - the dwellings of the craftsmen as well as the residence of the Byzantine *stratêgos*.⁹¹

It is, of course, hazardous to generalize.⁹² Some of the fortified settlements incorporated earlier fortifications. Local conditions varied widely in the Byzantine and former Bulgarian lands. Basil II's protracted war with *Tsar*' Samuel of Bulgaria entailed the building or repair of fortifications by both sides. It remains the case that the fortification of the Byzantine towns was performed by the State⁹³; and that the fortifications not only of great military bases such as Philippi, Adrianople and Philippopolis⁹⁴, but also of middling towns such as Viza were maintained through the 11th and 12th century. Psellus claims that at the time of Tornicius' rebellion in 1047, the walls of Constantinople and of «the forts to the West» were in disrepair, due to indolence and the lack of recent military threats. But he also indicates that not one of the forts fell to Tornicius' forces.⁹⁵

A strategy of «defence in depth», with exiguous frontier forces and fortified strongpoints and towns, has been postulated for the East-

⁹¹ P. Tivchev, *Cités*, 154-156, 170; I. Changova, «K'm v'prosa za ustroystvo na srednovekovniya b'lgarski grad IX-XIVv.», in: *Arkitektura na p'rvata i vtorata b'lgarska d'rzava*, ed. G. Kozhukharov (Sofia 1975) pp. 93, 94, 96-97, 92-93.

⁹² Not all fortified towns boomed: for example, in the 11th and 12th centuries the inhabited area within Sofia's walls was, judging by the distribution of pottery-finds, smaller and more thinly populated than that of the preceding or subsequent periods: M. Stancheva and L. Doncheva-Petkova «Sur la surface habitée de Sredec aux IX-XIV siècles», *Izvestiya na Arkheologicheskiya Institut* 35 (1979) pp. 124, 127, 133 and fig. 40, p. 132. Preslav and Pliska seem also to have undergone economic and demographic decline during the Byzantine occupation: S.N. Lishev, *B'lgarsk. grad*, pp. 64-65.

⁹³ J. Lefort, *Macédoine*, p. 265; N. Oikonomides, «The donations of castles in the last quarter of the 11th century», *Polychronion: Festschrift für F. Dölger zum 75. Geburtstag* (Heidelberg 1966) pp. 416-417 and n. 12, repr. in *Documents et études sur les institutions de Byzance*.

⁹⁴ On the defences of Philippopolis and Adrianople, see *Alexiad.* X, 3; XIV, 8; Leib, II, pp. 196-197; III, 178; Sew., pp. 300-301, 463. On Philippopolis, see also *Princeton Encyclopedia of Classical Sites*, ed. R. Stilwell (Princeton 1976) p. 706; on Adrianople (mainly classical), *PRE I Reihe*, VII (Stuttgart 1912) col. 2175.

⁹⁵ Psellus, *Chronographia*, II, 19, 28; Sew., pp. 210, 220.

ern Balkans of the 3rd and 4th centuries A.D.⁹⁶. Parallels between Byzantine frontier arrangements in the 6th and early 7th centuries and those of the 11th and 12th centuries have been drawn by V. Tapkova-Zaimova. Then, too, barbarian leaders of warbands were employed as borderers in the Danube region.⁹⁷ The maintenance of many fortifications in a good state of repair is the corollary of this. That there was a conscious policy of «defence in depth» in the Middle Byzantine Period is suggested by the contrast between towns near the European and Asian coasts. Whereas such towns as Rhaedestus, Selymbria and Roussion were guarded by formidable walls, Lampsacus, an important town on the eastern shore of the Hellespont, does not seem to have been fortified until the 14th century.⁹⁸

Our argument, then, is that the Byzantine government deliberately relied on «bricks and mortar» as the principal means of withstanding incursions from northern peoples. It did so even when a more active defensive strategy might have been feasible, in the first half of the 11th century. The ability of population-centres to endure prolonged inundations of barbarians was an essential precondition for the functioning of Byzantine diplomacy. Strategy jelled with diplomacy to encourage delays, and to deny the barbarians the opportunity to do battle, the activity which «before every other craft or science [they] practise». The objectives of the diplomacy - to discourage barbarians from attacking and, if they did attack, to induce them to withdraw - are obvious. But it is perhaps less obvious that by the very action of conducting diplomacy, sending messages and negotiating, the Byzantines gained a crucial advantage over barbarian adversaries. For time was usually against the invaders, especially invaders from the steppes. Delay, as a function of diplomacy, could have the effect of a *military* solution. It could cause the death or dispersal of the enemy, something which even a victory on the battlefield did not necessarily achieve.

By declining to do battle, and by protracted negotiations, the

⁹⁶ E.N. Luttwak, *The grand strategy of the Roman Empire* (Baltimore 1979) pp. 132-136. Compare with the strategy which Anna Comnena ascribes to John Tzimiskes, above n. 77.

⁹⁷ V. Tapkova-Zaimova, *Dunav-granich. zona*, pp. 87-89.

⁹⁸ P. Tivčev, *Cités*, pp. 155-156; S.N. Lishev, *B'lgarsk. grad*, p. 80; G.G. Litavrin, *Viz. obshchestvo*, p. 122. That Roussion was fortified is indicated by its designation as a *civitas* in 1097 by the anonymous *Gesta Francorum*, ed. R. Hill, p. 10; cf. *Alexiad.*, VII, 9, Leib, II, pp. 119-120; Sew., p. 240.

Byzantines could hope for any one of three possible developments, without any military exertion on their own part : plague, starvation or the break-up of the barbarian host through lack of military action. At least two major invasions in the 11th century came to nothing because of the outbreak of plague. In 1049⁹⁹, according to Scylitzes' chronicle, the Pechenegs «found a great abundance of livestock, wine and drinks made of honey, which they had never heard tell of before, and they guzzled on these without restraint. A disease affecting the bowels struck them, and countless masses of them perished each day». Their numbers and morale sank to the point where they had to sue for terms. In 1064, another nomadic people, the Uzes, were likewise stricken by disease, and their invasion, which is said to have caused panic at Constantinople, petered out.¹⁰⁰ Unfamiliar food and drink could, when consumed in excess, cause widespread disease, such as the dysentery mentioned by Scylitzes. Perhaps it was similar indulgence that led to an outbreak of dysentery among the Rus' during their expedition against the Empire in 941. The «terrible disease» is said to have killed many of those who had survived the imperial warships' Greek Fire.¹⁰¹ The nomads were lightly equipped, lacked siege-engines, and so rarely engaged in protracted sieges. But those barbarians sophisticated enough to besiege Byzantine strongpoints were prey to the diseases which also afflicted medieval siege armies in Western Europe. Dysentery was one of the chief reasons for the *débauche* of Bohemond's siege of Dyrachium in 1108. According to Anna Comnena, the true cause of the dysentery was «the wrath of God [which] struck against this countless, invincible host and killed the men off one after another».¹⁰² Disease

⁹⁹ Arguments for an earlier dating of the invasion are presented by A.P. Kazhdan, «Once more about the 'alleged' Russo-Byzantine treaty (ca. 1047) and the Pecheneg crossing of the Danube», *JÖB* 26 (1977) pp. 65-77.

¹⁰⁰ Scyl., ed. Thurn, p. 458; Scyl. in, ed. E.T. Tsolakes, *Hē Synecchia tēs chronographias tou Iōannou Skylitzē* (Thessalonica 1968) p. 115; Attal., ed. Bekker, pp. 30, 85. Byzantine writers' references to the nomads' filthy habits and consumption of foul things (*miarophagion*, Attal., p. 30) may amount to more than mere literary *topoi*.

¹⁰¹ Gregory the Monk, *Life of St Basil the New*, in A.N. Veselovsky, «Razyskaniya v oblasti russkogo dukhovnogo stikha», *Sbornik Otdeleniya Russkogo Yazyka i Slovesnosti Imperatorskoy Akademii Nauk* 46, no. 6, 1889, *prilozhenie*, pp. 68, 66. That the disease is represented as occurring in fulfillment of the saint's prophecy does not invalidate its historicity.

¹⁰² *Alexiad.* XIII, 2, 8, Leib, III, pp. 93-94, 116; Sew., pp. 400, 417.

had also wracked the Norman army while it was encamped on the river Glykys in the winter of 1084-85, and Bohemond had then been obliged by illness to return to Italy.¹⁰³ Anna Comnena may really have this outbreak in mind when she describes an epidemic which she represents as afflicting the Normans in 1081. Our interest is less in whether there were two separate outbreaks, in 1081 and 1084-85, or only one, than in the fact that Anna's words evince Byzantine awareness of the great strategic significance of disease : «the strangeness of the climate distressed them greatly, so that in the course of three months, it is said, up to 10,000 men perished. This disease attacked Robert's cavalry, too, and many died...; in the lower ranks of the cavalry the number of dead was incalculable». ¹⁰⁴ I suggest that an awareness of the likelihood of an outbreak of disease contributed to the Byzantines' tendency to shun battle and to protract negotiations.

Besides disease, famine could occur as a result of delays. Herein lay a paradox of which the Byzantines were probably aware. The vast size of the barbarian hordes was of little avail to them in assaults on formidable fortifications, and their very numbers posed enormous problems of provisioning. Thus Alexius Comnenus was unimpressed by the size of the Crusading army which invested Nicaea in 1097 : «he was confident that the great strength of its walls made Nicaea impregnable; the Latins would never take it». ¹⁰⁵ For all her protestations of horror at the advance of «countless Frankish armies» on Constantinople, Anna Comnena shows a shrewd awareness of the extent to which provisioning requirements determined their movements. She relates that the Crusaders had planned to unite all their forces on the eastern shore of the Sea of Marmara before proceeding towards Nicaea. «However, their numbers were so immense that further delay became impossible - the food supplies were insufficient». The Crusading armies therefore

¹⁰³ William of Apulia, *La geste de Robert Guiscard*, ed. and French trs. M. Mathieu (Palermo 1961) pp. 246-249. Robert Guiscard himself died of «fever» in July, 1085, when about to join Roger Borsa for the siege of Cephallonia: *ibid.*, pp. 248-249; *Alexiad.* VI, 6, Leib, II, p. 56; Sew., p. 192.

¹⁰⁴ *Alexiad.* IV, 3, Leib, I, p. 149; Sew., pp. 139-140. Disease struck the Normans yet again in 1185 after their siege and eventual capture of Thessalonica. As many Normans died of illness as had been killed by Byzantine archers during the siege: C.M. Brand, *Byzantium confronts the West* (Cambridge, Mass. 1968) p. 169.

¹⁰⁵ *Alexiad.* XI, 2, Leib, III, pp. 10-11; Sew., p. 336.

had to move on before Raymond of Toulouse could join them, and they had to divide into two separate units.¹⁰⁶

If adequate provisioning was difficult for Western armies which were attacking or passing through Byzantine lands, it was still more intractable a problem for the primitive peoples of the steppes. However much we discount the figures offered by Byzantine chroniclers, such as 800,000 Pechenegs in 1048-49,¹⁰⁷ the nomads' numbers were vast. Their numbers were swollen by the women and children. For dependants tended to accompany the warriors, not merely on mass-migrations, but even on lesser raids. For example, Michael Psellus mentions old folk and children in the Pechenegs' camp during their invasion in 1059. And in 1087, the Pechenegs went into battle with their covered wagons, in which rode their women and children.¹⁰⁸

One of the functions of the women and adolescents was to tend the nomads' most valuable and vital asset, their horses and other livestock. These animals' need for grass or other fodder provided still greater logistical problems for the nomads, especially since each warrior normally needed several reserve mounts. D. Sinor has estimated that one horse consumes the grazing capacity of 10 acres of fairly productive grassland in a month. So hosts comprising tens of thousands of horses and cattle ate their way through enormous tracts of pasture.¹⁰⁹ Sinor has argued that even Hungary, whose Alföld is an outcrop of the Eurasian steppe, was basically unsuitable for the pastoral way of life. When account has been taken of land which was already occupied by farmers, forests or bogs, the amount of grazing land available to incoming Magyars or Mongols was insufficient for their herds. They could only survive there by switching to agriculture themselves.¹¹⁰ It seems to me very probable that the same constraints affected the

¹⁰⁶ *Alexiad*, XI, 1, Leib, III, p. 7; Sew., p. 333

¹⁰⁷ Scyl., ed. Thurn, p. 458.

¹⁰⁸ Psellus, *Chronographia*, II, p. 127; Sew., p. 320; *Alexiad*, VII, 3, Leib, II, p. 98; Sew., p. 224.

¹⁰⁹ D. Sinor, «Horse and pasture in Inner Asian history», *Oriens Extremus* 19(1972), p. 182, repr. in his *Inner Asia and its contacts with medieval Europe* (London, 1977). Lower estimates of consumption needs are made by R.P. Lindner, «Nomadism, horses and Huns», *Past and Present* no. 92 (1981) pp. 14-15 and n. 46.

¹¹⁰ D. Sinor, *Horse and pasture*, pp. 182-183; cf. K. Leyser, «The battle of the Lech, 955», *History* 50 (1965) pp. 3-4; R.P. Lindner, *Nomadism*, p. 19.

nomads once they crossed the Haemus range and pressed southwards. The Thracian plain was proverbially fertile in Antiquity, but it was unsuitable for large nomad hordes. When high mountain ranges such as the Rhodope and the extensive forests are excluded, the remaining area is considerably smaller than the Hungarian Plain's.¹¹¹ Arguments concerning demography in the Byzantine Middle Period are rife. While there is some literary evidence for depopulation, evidence has also been adduced in favour of some population increase.¹¹² In any case, the population of Thrace was sizeable enough to provide the nomads with the quantities of prisoners to which 11th century Byzantine writers repeatedly allude. The ploughed lands and vineyards by which these people had lived must have curtailed the amount of grazing land readily available to the pastoralists. Moreover, the Thracian plain is liable to suffer drought, especially during the later part of the campaigning season, from August onwards.¹¹³ Yet ample water supplies were absolutely vital for the pastoralists' herds. As a result, the nomads' haunts were on riverways, or at any rate not far from water, so as to assure their animals lush pastures and sufficient drinking water. The animals' needs were of capital importance to the nomads. For their horses were their sole strategic weapon, endowing them with mobility and the advantage of surprise. Liudprand of Cremona relates how Hugh of Arles instigated a Magyar raid on Spain, providing the raiders with a guide. *En route* to Cordoba, the Magyars came to a region where the water supply was inadequate. So, fearing that their horses and they themselves would die of thirst, they slew their guide and withdrew!¹¹⁴

¹¹¹ In 1965, 32.6% of modern Bulgaria's surface area was still covered with forest and woodland: *Oxford Economic Atlas of the World*, ed. D.B. Jones (Oxford 1972⁴) p. 131. Cf. general maps of land use and of predominant economies, *ibid.*, pp. 6, 7.

¹¹² N. Svoronos, «Remarques sur les structures économiques de l'empire byzantin au XI siècle», *Travaux et Mémoires* 6 (1976) pp. 62, 63; G.G. Litavrin, *Viz. obshchestvo*, p. 111.

¹¹³ Anna Comnena notes how rough ground planted with vines was unsuitable for cavalry manoeuvres: *Alexiad.* X, 3, Leib, II, p. 195; Scw., p. 300. See also R.P. Lindner, *Nomadism*, pp. 15-16. On the aridity of the Thracian plain, see F. Schevill, *The Balkan peninsula and the Near East* (London 1922) p. 22; *Nagel's Encyclopedia-Guide: Bulgaria* (Geneva 1968) p. 31; *Atlas narodna republika B'lgariya* (Sofia 1973) pp. 55, 57, 60-61; B. Kayser and K. Thompson, *Economic atlas of Greece* (Athens 1964) p. 103.

¹¹⁴ Liudprand, *Antapodosis*, V, 19, Becker, p. 141; Wright, p. 189; D. Sinor, *Horse and pasture*, p.

Thrace was more fertile than central Spain. But, paradoxically, the very richness of Thracian agriculture militated, together with its aridity in late summer, against prolonged occupation of the area by large hordes of nomads. The humans might gorge themselves on food and wine there, but their all-important «weapons» - their horses - were liable to suffer from inadequate grazing. The invading hordes thus had a double logistical problem, of feeding not only themselves but also their large herds. The larger, and the more superficially terrifying, the mass of invading nomads, the more acute their logistical problem became.

This is suggested by the fact that at least one of the mass-migrations into the Balkans in the 11th century was beset by «famine» as well as by disease: the Uzes' in 1064.¹¹⁵ It is true that in the 1070s and 1080s the Pechenegs were able to establish themselves in the Danubian plain, and even to frequent Thrace. This fact may seem to overturn our above argument. But it must be emphasized that the Pechenegs were only able to establish themselves so far south thanks to the internal collapse of Byzantine State power. The Danubian towns not only revolted, but actually concluded a treaty with the Pechenegs and to some extent cooperated with them.¹¹⁶ Anna Comnena observes that the Pechenegs were thereby enabled to occupy fortresses in the Danubian plain, and to cultivate wheat and millet. The growing of grain for human and animal consumption is compatible with a nomadic way of life.¹¹⁷ The Pechenegs were also favoured by the terrain and wetter climate of the grasslands just south of the Danube. They are more akin to the steppes than are the lands south of the Haemus range. But that the Pechenegs were, in the 1070s and 1080s, enjoying extraordinary advantages from the collaboration of the sedentary population of the

178; S.A. Pletneva, *Ot kocheviy k gorodam* (Moscow 1967) pp. 13-15.

¹¹⁵ Attal., ed. Bekker, p. 85; Scylitzes in, ed. E.T. Tsolakes, *Hē Synecheia*, p. 115.

¹¹⁶ E. Stănescu, *La crise du Bas-Danube au cours de la seconde moitié de XI siècle*, pp. 59-61, 65; N.-S. Tanaşoca, *Mixobarbares*, p. 80.

¹¹⁷ *Alexiad.* VI, 14, Leib, II, pp. 81-82; Sew., p. 212; S.A. Pletneva, *Ot kocheviy k gorodam*, p. 20; cf. V.A. Kuzvetsov's review of S.A. Pletneva's work, *Sovetskaya Arkheologiya*, 1969, pt. 2, p. 299. D. Sinor (*Horse and pasture*, p. 174, n. 20) remarks: «The Inner Asian pastoralists' need for grain is very often overlooked. Famine - caused by great losses in the herds - was a constant threat». The Pechenegs in the 1080s also benefitted from the support of Traulos' «Manichaeans»: see below.

Danubian towns is shown by the experience of the Cumans in the Danube area in 1087. Even though they had defeated the Pechenegs and hemmed them in «Ozolimne», they were obliged to withdraw to the steppes, «since they lacked provisions». ¹¹⁸ Thanks to their secure base in the Danubian plain, the Pechenegs could repeatedly raid further south, across the Haemus. Anna Comnena remarks of their incursions that they «did not begin in any one of the four seasons and end in the next, lasting from the start of summer, for example, until autumn...; the Scyths did not limit their evil activities to one whole year, even, but troubled the lands of the Romans over a considerable number of years». ¹¹⁹ But Anna clearly regards the phenomenon of continuous nomad incursions as very exceptional, alien to preceding and to subsequent periods. That the Pechenegs even in the 1080s were prey to logistical problems once they crossed the Haemus *en masse* is suggested by the Byzantines' use of the offer of «ample provisions» as a bargaining counter in negotiations with them in Thrace. ¹²⁰ The Byzantines' exploitation of the indispensability of their animals to the Pechenegs is exemplified by Alexius' strategem whereby «very many horses» of the nomads were rounded up at dawn while they were «grazing on the plain», together with the other livestock. ¹²¹ Alexius was correspondingly solicitous that his own «horses and pack-animals should have sufficient fodder» in Bithynia, which «is rich in grass». He was anxious that they be «big and strong enough» to carry their riders securely during cavalry charges. Byzantine awareness of the nomads' dependence on their animals is also suggested by Constantine VII's observation that the Pechenegs escorting an imperial agent from Cherson would demand compensation for, *inter alia*, «the wear and tear to their horses (*alogón*)». ¹²² Even in their heyday, the Pechenegs were not free

¹¹⁸ *Alexiad.* VII, 5, Leib, II, p. 105; Sew., p. 229. On Ozolimne, see P. Diaconu, *Les Petchénègues au Bas-Danube*, pp. 121-127.

¹¹⁹ *Alexiad.* VII, 2, Leib, II, p. 89; Sew., p. 218. Anna states that she only narrates a few of the incursions that occurred. Cf. V.A. Arutyunova «K voprosu o vzaimotnosheniyakh Vizantii s Pechenegami», VV 33 (1972) pp. 118-119; P. Lemerle, *Cinq études sur l'XI siècle byzantin* (Paris 1977) p. 172.

¹²⁰ *Alexiad.* VII, 6, Leib, II, p. 106; Sew., p. 230.

¹²¹ *Alexiad.* VII, 10, Leib, II, p. 121; Sew., p. 242.

¹²² *Alexiad.* XV, 2, Leib, III, p. 194; Sew., p. 476; Constantine VII, *De Administrando Imperio*, ed.

from logistical problems. Lack of sufficient provisions may explain their abrupt abandonment of the siege which, in alliance with natives of the Danubian towns, they mounted against Constantinople in 1075. It had obliged the Uze hordes to scatter in quest of food in 1064.¹²³ So merely by deferring hostilities and by protracted negotiations, the Byzantines could hope for the starvation of the barbarians or of their herds, or for their involuntary withdrawal.

The third possible consequence of delay was the dispersal of the invading northerners into smaller groups. This could occur for several reasons even without deliberate prompting from the Byzantines. A sizeable horde tied to one spot by truces and lengthy negotiations would soon begin to encounter the logistical difficulties discussed above. Nomads might well begin to drift away because of their beasts' need for pasture, or simply from the impatience with a tranquil life which Theophylact of Ochrid noted.¹²⁴ A chieftain who became entwined in negotiations risked forfeiting his authority, which to a large extent rested on leadership in war, and on the spoils of war. The Byzantines were aware of the essentially anarchic nature of nomadic society. Mauropous states that the Pechenegs «are not organized in any kind of political structure (*politeia*), nor are they joined together by any bond of community of sentiment.»¹²⁵ Central authority itself, let alone the delegation of plenipotentiary authority to ambassadors, were not familiar, or readily acceptable, concepts in such a society. So rulers or envoys who made generous concessions were liable to be suspected by their peoples of treachery. Simply by offering gifts or tribute, the Byzantines could hope to stir up suspicions, dissension and dissolution in the northerners' often fragile confederations. Anna

G. Moravcsik and R.J.H. Jenkins, pp. 54-55. I render *alogón* as «horses», as in Modern Greek, *pace* Jenkins' «cattle». See also Pseudo-Maurice, *Strategicon*, ed. H. Mihăescu, pp. 270-273; and the explicit statement of Leo VI, *Tactica* 18,62 (PG 107, col. 961A).

¹²³ Attal., ed. Bekker, pp. 208-209; Scylitzes, in ed. E.T. Tzolakes, *Hē Syncheia* pp. 115, 166. V.G. Vasilevsky (*Vizantiya i Pechenegi. Trudy*, I (St Petersburg 1908) p. 36) argues that the divisions between Pechenegs and the Danubian leader, Nestor, to which Attaleiates alludes, were fostered by Byzantine intrigues.

¹²⁴ See above.

¹²⁵ Mauropous, *Quae in Cod. Vatic. Gr. 676 supersunt*, ed. De Lagarde, no. 182, p. 144. Pseudo-Maurice clearly distinguishes between the Avars and other, less ordered and therefore less formidable, nomadic peoples: *Strategicon*, ed. H. Mihăescu, pp. 268-269.

Comnena mentions her father's inability to cause dissension among the Pechenegs in 1087 as an unusual phenomenon, a deviation from the norm.¹²⁶ But the power of gifts by themselves to cause arguments among barbarians is most clearly shown by the *Russian Primary Chronicle*. The episode which it purports to relate, set on the Danube in 944, is almost certainly fictitious. But it is valuable as an indication of how a Russian writer imagined Prince Igor's retainers would react to a Byzantine offer of tribute: «If the emperor speaks thus, what more do we want than this, to receive gold, silver and cloaks without having to fight for them? Who knows who will win, we or he?» Igor is depicted as «obeying» the wishes of his retainers, and agreeing to call off the expedition, and to accept Byzantine tribute. But had he not done so, he would seem to have been risking desertions.¹²⁷ In 1043, a well-attested Russian expedition also halted on the Danube. Dissension broke out between the Russian soldiers and the Scandinavians who had joined in the venture. The former are said to have been unwilling to press on to Constantinople, but eventually the Russian commander, Vladimir Yaroslavich, «obeyed» the Scandinavians. No mention of any Byzantine offer of tribute is made by the Russian source for this incident.¹²⁸ But the episode suggests that spells of inaction bred discord in seemingly formidable hosts.

Here, then, were three ways in which the very act of negotiating, offering gifts or truces, could dissolve a barbarian army. It is questionable whether either Byzantines or barbarians were wholly aware of them. The barbarians may well have ascribed to Byzantine poison the illnesses which struck them individually or in droves.¹²⁹ They may equally have attributed to Byzantine intrigues desertions from their ranks which were really the product of their own logistical deficiencies. The modern historian is likewise in danger of attributing all occasions of Byzantium's deliverance from barbarian incursions to the direct, de-

¹²⁶ «Specious arguments failed to divide them», *Alexiad*, VII, 2, Leib, II, p. 89; Sew., pp. 218-219.

¹²⁷ *Povest'* s.a. 944, p. 34; Cross, p. 73. The historicity of the expedition is advocated, without presentation of compelling new evidence, by A.M. Sakharov, *Diplomatiya Drevney Rusi* (Moscow 1980), pp. 227, 231-232.

¹²⁸ *Sofiyskaya Letopis'* I s.a. 1043, *Polnoc Sobranie Russkikh Letopisey* V (St Petersburg 1851) p. 137; *Novgorodskaya Letopis'* IV s.a. 1043, *PSRL* VII (Petrograd 1915³) p. 115.

¹²⁹ See above, nn. 34, 103.

liberate, intervention of Byzantine diplomacy. Moreover, the Byzantines themselves had their blind spots. They never seem to have realized the connexion between the loose-knit nature of nomadic society and the nomads' chronic inability to keep their agreements. The «fickle» nature of the «Scyths» and the ephemeral nature of any agreement made with them is a *topos* of the *Alexiad*.¹³⁰ But there is evidence which indicates the Byzantines' awareness that time was on their side in their dealings with peoples who lacked «any kind of political structure», and that formal military victories over them were futile. For even if victories over them were won, they were unlikely to be decisive, and however many chieftains were eliminated, others would emerge, Kegen-like, from the well-stocked ranks. Psellus probably had this in mind when he stated that a victory over the nomads was tantamount to a defeat at their hands.¹³¹ Anna Comnena, for all her praise of her father's courage during a sally against the Pechenegs in 1091, does not suppress the criticism which was levelled against him at the time, «that this victory was a profitless joy to us, to them a harmless pain. For despite it all the Scyths in their countless hosts continued to ravage everything». ¹³² To seek a decisive victory over them was vain, not merely because of their numerical superiority, but also because of the amorphous, will-o'-the-wisp-character of their hosts. Mauropous pointed out the impracticability and futility of warring against the Pechenegs, who make hit-and-run raids and then «readily drop down like frogs into marshes, glades and bogs». ¹³³ Psellus likewise remarked on the speed and ease with which nomad hordes dissolved, only to reassemble suddenly and without warning elsewhere. ¹³⁴

It was therefore more prudent to «Do nothing» - to wait and see whether the barbarian onrush spent its force and ebbed away of its own accord. If the barbarians did not break up into smaller, more vulnera-

¹³⁰ E.g. *Alexiad*, VII, 6; VIII, 4; X, 3; Leib, II, pp. 106, 136, 196; Sew., pp. 230, 253-254, 301.

¹³¹ Psellus, I, *Scripta Minora*, p. 18.

¹³² *Alexiad*, VIII, 3, Leib, II, p. 133; Sew., p. 251. Anna also notes similar criticism of Alexius' precipitate engagement of Guiscard in 1081: that «if he had not provoked Robert too soon, the latter would have been beaten easily in any case», *Alexiad*, VI, 7, Leib, II, p. 60; Sew., p. 195; cf. *ibid.*, IV, 5, Leib, I, p. 155; Sew., p. 144.

¹³³ Mauropous, *Quae in Cod. Vatic. Gr. 676 supersunt*, ed. De Lagarde, no. 182, p. 144.

¹³⁴ Psellus, *Chronographia*, II, p. 126; Sew., pp. 318-319.

ble, units or retire, military inaction might well still be advisable : Byzantine officials, townsfolk and refugees from the countryside¹³⁵ could sit it out behind sturdy walls. One of the more explicit expositions of «Do nothing» comes in an oration of Psellus. He lauds the emperor's handling of an insurrection, not a foreign attack, but the underlying rationale is the same : «Surely it was a mark of the utmost shrewdness (*agchinois*) and unsurpassable intelligence so skilfully to cope with the circumstances... rushing headlong against you and to await the judgement of God and to do nothing (*hesychasai*) and to account what had happened as if it had never occurred and to practise wisdom in a paradoxical way». «You did not imitate the many who often act rashly and at an inopportune time and who therefore fail». ¹³⁶ Psellus goes on to say that the enemy threat foundered of its own accord, ¹³⁷ and to dilate upon the virtues of clemency and peace, as against war. One may object that Psellus was merely rationalizing upon impotence, and the same might be said of Byzantium's general exaltation of peace. But the careful, sparing, deployment of merely adequate resources, and the maximal use of those assets of literacy and continuity which the barbarians lacked was an achievement. It represented a harnessing of such *divitiae* as were available to *sapientia*, in a way which Liudprand himself did not wholly comprehend. Anna Comnena summed up Byzantium's position thus : «When danger hangs over us, being unable to make a frontal assault, we change our tactics and seek to conquer without bloodshed... "Victory" means the same thing always, but the means by which generals attain it are varied and of intricate patterns». ¹³⁸

If Byzantium's armed forces were generally slow to act, or react to attacks from the north or west by resort to weapons, Byzantine diplomatic activity was speedy and agile: as in the tactical manuals, so in diplomatic practice. The diplomacy's basic objective was «Divide-and-Rule». It was formulated clearly by Constantine VII in the proemium of his *De Administrando*. There is, indeed, also a vein of Solomonic

¹³⁵ See above.

¹³⁶ Psellus, I, *Scripta Minora*, p. 35.

¹³⁷ «to oikeion skotos to tō hēliō soi episkotēsān nephos apeklērōsato», *ibid.*: literally, «its own darkness befell the cloud which was casting a shadow over you, the sun».

¹³⁸ *Alexiad*, XV, 3, Leib, III, p. 195; Sew., p. 477; G. Buckler, *Anna Comnena*, p. 144 and n. 3.

rhetoric: «For so shall [the barbarians] quake before thee as one mighty in wisdom... Thou shalt appear terrible unto them, and at thy face shall trembling take hold upon them».¹³⁹ But the specific «doctrine» which Constantine lays down is more modest in its goals: «first, which nation in which respects can benefit or harm the Romans, and how and by which other nation each of these may be combatted and overcome»; «how to handle these [nations] and make them friendly, or how to make war on them and oppose them».¹⁴⁰ Constantine's overall goal was the modest one of equilibrium on the Empire's northern and western approaches. Only for Armenia, to the east, are expansionist aims outlined, and previous attempts at expansion related.¹⁴¹

The painstaking, rambling details of the *De Administrando* represent an attempt to allay the dreadful *unpredictability* of the Empire's neighbours. A military manual of the late 10th century expresses plainly what Constantine's rhetorical proemium to the *De Administrando* merely implies: the Byzantines' pressing desire to know what trouble was brewing beyond the frontier. The manual recommends former prisoners-of-war as making the best spies, particularly when their wives and children were living inside the Empire as, in effect, hostages. Such spies could find out everything which was afoot among their compatriots, «not only the Bulgarians, ... but also the other neighbouring peoples, that is, in the land of the Pechenegs, the Magyars and the Rus', so that none of their plans may be unknown to us».¹⁴² Similar advice is given by Cecaumenos to those in charge of the frontiers: «If you can, make friends in the country [of the neighbouring barbarian potentate or 'toparch'], so that through them you may learn of his plans, and send gifts to them secretly».¹⁴³

The *De Administrando* and the *De Cerimoniis* are sorry monuments to the intensive intelligence-gathering which the above-mentioned manuals enjoin. Much of their material was of purely antiqua-

¹³⁹ Constantine Porph., *De Administrando Imperio*, ed. G. Moravcsik and R.J.H. Jenkins, pp. 46-47; G.L. Huxley, «The scholarship of Constantine Porphyrogenitus», *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy* 80, section c, no. 2 (1980) p. 37.

¹⁴⁰ Const. Porph., *DAI*, ed. Moravcsik-Jenkins, pp. 44-45, 46-47; D.A. Miller, *Byz. treaties*, p. 59.

¹⁴¹ Const. Porph., *DAI*, ed. Moravcsik-Jenkins, pp. 204-205, 208-215, 218-221.

¹⁴² *Incerti Scriptoris Liber de Re Militari*, ed. R. Vári (Leipzig 1901) p. 29.

¹⁴³ Cecaumenos, *Strategicon*, ed. Litavrin, pp. 166-167.

rian value to 10th century readers, or was inaccurate.¹⁴⁴ But one should hesitate to dismiss all the digressions of the *De Administrando* as irrelevant pedantry. For its brief is avowedly very broad, in fact encyclopedic: «... the difference between other nations, their origins and customs and manner of life, and the position and climate of the land they dwell in».¹⁴⁵ Such a compilation, in utilizing the properties which «other nations» lacked - literacy, record-keeping, continuity in government - put them to strategic ends. It was not solely out of anthropological interest that the *De Administrando* recorded the succession custom of the Pechenegs, whereby the authority of a chieftain passed to his cousin and «the rank may not run exclusively in one branch of the family». Knowledge of this custom would enlighten imperial diplomats as to whom it was worth cultivating.¹⁴⁶ The prolix geographical material on the names and locations of the Pecheneg tribes and other geographical data were of practical application. The «cloven hoof» of strategic considerations is present in the list of journey times between the Pechenegs and other peoples such as the Rus', the Magyars and the Bulgars.¹⁴⁷ It is also present in the remarks on the two access-points across the isthmus of Perekop to the Crimea, «along which the Pechenegs pass through». Here was the place to halt the Pechenegs, if the contingency arose.¹⁴⁸ Constantine VII's description of the Rus' route from Kiev to Constantinople includes the individual names of the Dnieper Rapids, and details of some of the distances. The controversy over the «Normannist Question» which this passage has fuelled¹⁴⁹ has diverted attention from the question why its material was col-

¹⁴⁴ R.J.H. Jenkins in *De Administrando Imperio: II, Commentary*, pp. 1-3; G.L. Huxley, «A Porphyrogenitan portulan», *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* 17 (1976) pp. 298-299; C. Mango in *American Historical Review*, 79 (1974) p. 504.

¹⁴⁵ Const. Porph., *DAI*, ed. Moravcsik-Jenkins, pp. 44-47, 76-77.

¹⁴⁶ Const. Porph., *DAI*, pp. 166-167. G. Moravcsik wrote of ch. 37's material that «there is no reason to doubt that all of it is of Constantine's own time»: *DAI: II, Commentary*, p. 143. The sheer quantity of written records made or used by Alexius I in the conduct of his diplomacy was rightly stressed by G. Buckler, *Anna Comnena*, pp. 237-238.

¹⁴⁷ Const. Porph., *DAI*, pp. 168-169.

¹⁴⁸ Const. Porph., *DAI*, pp. 186-187; F.E. Wozniak, «The Crimean question, the Black Bulgarians and the Russo-Byzantine treaty of 944», *Journal of Medieval History* 5 (1979) pp. 123-124.

¹⁴⁹ The bibliography is reviewed by D. Obolensky, *DAI: II, Commentary*, pp. 16-18, 40-52; cf. *idem*.

lected, and why Constantine incorporated it in what is the most directly prescriptive section of his work. It seems to me that it was of strategic value. The placenames and specifications on the fact that the Rus' had to lead their slaves in chains for six miles past the fourth barrage might be of use to a Byzantine agent directing, or liaising with, Pechenegs: he might reward them there for a successful attack, or simply check that an ambush had been carried out successfully. Of the ford of Vrar, whose length and breadth are described, Constantine notes tersely that «It is at this point ... that the Pechenegs come down and attack the Rus'». ¹⁵⁰ Of similar significance is the information about Croatian sea power, inserted into a seriously outdated account of the situation in Croatia. Constantine's original text gave precise figures for the current number of cutters and galleys, besides observing that Croatian sea power had recently declined. ¹⁵¹ Croatian war potential might be taken into account as a means of putting pressure on the Bulgarians or the Venetians even if, as Constantine noted, «neither the galleys nor the cutters... ever go to war against anyone, unless of course they are attacked». ¹⁵²

The *De Administrando* makes passing references which indicate both the means whereby some of its material had been gathered, and the painstaking care with which the Byzantines monitored the situation beyond their borders. The essentials of their surveillance of the northern peoples have been well expounded by others. ¹⁵³ So observations on some particular aspects of the monitoring will here suffice. Firstly, it is worth emphasizing the sheer *regularity* of the operations :

«The Byzantine sources on the Scandinavians in Eastern Europe», *Varangian Problems: Scando-Slavica, Supplementum*, I (1970) pp. 158-160.

¹⁵⁰ Const. Porph., *DAI*, pp. 60-61; D. Obolensky, *DAI: Commentary*, p. 52; I. Sorlin, «Le témoignage de Constantin VII Porphyrogénète sur l'état ethnique et politique de la Russie au début du X^e siècle», *Cahiers du monde russe et soviétique* 6 (1965) p. 156.

¹⁵¹ Const. Porph., *DAI*, pp. 150-151. The details on Croatian sea power are contemporaneous with Constantine's compilation of his work, unlike the rest of the chapter on Croatia: R.J.H. Jenkins, *DAI: Commentary*, pp. 99-100, 129-130. The lack of naval potential on the part of the inland «White Croats» is also noted: *DAI*, pp. 152-153; *Commentary*, p. 130.

¹⁵² Const. Porph., *DAI*, pp. 150-151.

¹⁵³ E.g. S. Runciman, *Romanus Lecapenus and his reign*, pp. 99-118; D. Obolensky, *Northern neighbours*, pp. 509-512; *idem*, *Principles*, pp. 49-50; F.E. Wozniak, *Crimean question*, pp. 120-123.

an imperial agent was sent every year to one, perhaps two, groups of Pechenegs «with befitting and suitable presents». ¹⁵⁴ Secondly, for all the denunciation in Byzantine literary works of the fickle nomads' disregard for treaties, Constantine's practical manual stresses «the great value to the Roman emperor» of making «treaties of friendship and conventions» with the Pechenegs. Seemingly, these were renewed each year. ¹⁵⁵ So although the steppe nomads undoubtedly were unreliable, the Byzantines very patiently cultivated these «'devil's brats'». Thirdly, the practice of taking hostages from the Byzantines' principal northern allies constantly spun a web of potential «contacts» for the imperial government. For each year the imperial agent collected hostages from the Pechenegs. These were cosseted and entertained at Constantinople under the charge of a particular official. They were lavished with «all imperial benefits and honours suitable for the emperor to bestow». ¹⁵⁶ They may well have not merely observed but participated in the court ceremonies, in the role of «friends». ¹⁵⁷ In performing such a role they would have served to symbolise the Empire's universality, and on returning to the steppes they presumably impressed upon their compatriots the splendor of the court ceremonies, and the invincibility of the court's central figures, the emperors. Fourthly, the Byzantines appreciated the value of personal contacts with individual nomads, as a complement to the formal diplomatic relations and visits of «friends». These could be forged by full-time officials of the

¹⁵⁴ Const. Porph., *DAI*, pp. 48-49. Constantine does not indicate whether annual missions were sent both to the Dniester and to the Pechenegs in the vicinity of Cherson. Cf. G. Moravcsik, *DAI: Commentary*, p. 143.

¹⁵⁵ These «philikas... synthékas te kai spondas» were presumably intended to last for one year only. See above, n. 130. D.A. Miller (*Byz. treaties*, p. 59, n. 10) is sceptical about the likelihood of these treaties taking written form.

¹⁵⁶ Const. Porph., *DAI*, pp. 48-49.

¹⁵⁷ The imperial agent visiting the Pechenegs in the region of the Dnieper and Dniester took from among them «as many 'friends' as he sees fit», *DAI*, pp. 56-57. Care was taken to involve hostages and representatives of, or captives taken from, barbarians such as the Bulgars and Saracens in court banquets and other ceremonies: Philotheus, *Kleterologion*, in: N. Oikonomides, *Les listes de présence byzantines des IX et X siècles*, pp. 162-163 and n. 133, 166-167 and n. 141, 168-169, 176-181, 202-203; O. Treitinger, *Oström. Reichsidee*, pp. 102, 229. One important «friend» noted by Constantine VII was Bulcsu, the Magyar chieftain: *DAI*, pp. 178-179.

See below, n. 196.

Byzantine State, such as Catacalon Cecaumenos, who made firm friendships with individual Pechenegs while stationed on the Danube in the 1040s.¹⁵⁸ But they were also forged by «middlemen» who had no obvious or formal connexions with the State. I believe that this is implicit in Chapter 6 of Constantine Porphyrogenitus' *De Administrando*. He is both laconic and vague, writing of the Pechenegs who «trade with the Chersonites, and perform services for them and for the emperor in Russia and Khazaria and Zichia and all the parts beyond».¹⁵⁹ The precise form of these «services» (*douleiai*) is not specified. But Constantine's wording and his mention of the «contract which each Chersonite may make or agree to with an individual Pecheneg» strongly suggest that the Chersonites combined trading with diplomatic and intelligence work on behalf of the emperor.

There were several advantages to the imperial government in employing Chersonites as middlemen for dealings with individual Pechenegs. They were likely to be familiar with the nomads' customs, and those with some knowledge of a Turkic language would be able to give very precise, detailed, instructions to their agents. These Chersonites were presumably not regular State officials. Their operations could therefore be more secret than was possible in the case of the formal visits to the Pechenegs by imperial officials, which Constantine also describes. Secrecy was all the more desirable when skulduggery had to be performed, for example, assassination. Even if the Pecheneg «hit man» was caught, the chain linking him with the Byzantine emperor was so long and indistinct that further repercussions might be avoided. That the Byzantines were suspected of hiring foreign assassins is suggested by the *Russian Primary Chronicle*'s statement about the death of a pretender to the imperial throne, Leo «Diogenes». He had been harboured by the Russian prince, Vladimir Monomakh. In 1116,

¹⁵⁸ When one of them recognized Cecaumenos lying gravely wounded among the Byzantine dead after the Battle of Diacene, he picked him up, took him to his tent and nursed him back to health: Scyl., ed. Thurn, p. 469. Cecaumenos seems to have maintained links with the Pechenegs even after his appointment as Duke of Antioch, judging by the find of his seal (bearing this title on its legend) in the region of L'vov: N. Oikonomides, «Recherches sur l'histoire du Bas-Danube aux X-XI siècles: la Mésopotamie de l'Occident», *RESEE*, 3 (1965) p. 77, n. 64, repr. in his *Documents et études sur les institutions de Byzance*.

¹⁵⁹ Const. Porph., *DAI*, pp. 52-53.

he seized several Danube towns, seemingly with Russian assistance, but «two Saracens, sent by the emperor, killed him by craft». Similarly, the Byzantines vicariously seized Oleg Svyatoslavich at Tmutarakan' in 1079.¹⁶⁰ The Chersonites' own loyalties were far from steadfast.¹⁶¹ But the Byzantines were patient with them, as they were with the steppe nomads themselves. Anna Comnena comments on the «extraordinary forbearance» of her father towards a Pecheneg named Tatranes, who «had many times deserted to the emperor and later gone back home», and who misled the Pechenegs about the size of Alexius' army.¹⁶² In thus employing a double-agent, Alexius was in fact observing the precepts of Leo VI's *Tactica* concerning «disinformation». Leo recommended that the enemy be led by false reports of Byzantine deserters to expect the opposite of what the Byzantine commander intended to do. But if the enemy proved to be sceptical, and did not believe the reports, the Byzantine commander should actually carry out the plans outlined in them!¹⁶³

The Byzantines, then, took great pains to acquire various types of information about the neighbours' conditions and intentions, and gathered it through both State officials and middlemen such as the Chersonites. On the one hand was background material, a few morsels of which are incorporated in the *De Administrando*. As has already been argued, there is diplomatic and strategic significance in apparently recherché information about the geography of the area north of the Black Sea and about the customs of the Pechenegs. Similar significance pertains to Constantine's description of the means whereby the Rus' annually acquired their boats from the Slavs, and to his naming of the particular tribes of Pechenegs who adjoined the Rus' and the Slav tribes, which are themselves individually named.¹⁶⁴ On the other hand were the daily, or hourly, reports on enemy intentions during, or on the eve of, a military operation. Between these extremes were general

¹⁶⁰ *Povest's.a.* 1116, p. 201; *Ipatevskaya Letopis's.a.* 1116, col. 283; *Povest's.a.* 1079, p. 135; Cross, p.

168. Byzantine complicity in the seizure of Oleg is regarded as highly probable by V.V. Mavrodin.

«Tmutarakan'», *Voprosy Istorii*, 1980, no. 11, p. 181.

¹⁶¹ Const. Porph., *DAI*, pp. 286-287; D. Obolensky, *Byz. Commonwealth*, pp. 175-176.

¹⁶² Anna Comnena, *Alexiad.* VII, 10, Leib, II, p. 120; Sew., pp. 240-241.

¹⁶³ Leo VI, *Tactica*, XX, 15, Migne, *PG*, CVII, col. 1017^D; cf. *ibid.*, XX, 8, col. 1017^A.

¹⁶⁴ Const. Porph., *DAI*, pp. 56-59, 168-169.

reports from agents on the political situation among the barbarians, «so that none of their plans may be unknown to us». ¹⁶⁵ Conversely, the Byzantines continually sought to disseminate false or inaccurate information about themselves, both at the level of military strength and tactical plans, and at the level of court ceremonial and propaganda, where fictions implying the great antiquity of customs, buildings and institutions were consciously purveyed.

But were all these attempts to gather information and disseminate misleading information worthwhile ? Was the information put to effective use ? A methodological difficulty stands in the way of answering these questions. For Byzantine policy towards its northern and western neighbours was essentially conservative and defensive, seeking the preservation of the *status quo* or, simply, survival. Therefore the greatest achievements of the Empire's foreign policy tended to be negative ones - not what it caused to happen, but what it *prevented* from happening. This, coupled with the secrecy of so many operations and with the sparseness of our sources, makes it hard to gauge Byzantium's part in causing what might have happened not to happen. A general assessment of the efficacy of Byzantine diplomacy would require fuller consideration of Byzantium's internal condition and military organization than can be offered here. We will conclude with some instances of how Byzantium's rulers acted upon the information they received about their neighbours on political and military planes, and the use which they made of it to court barbarian potentates as far away as Germany and Normandy.

Firstly, it is noteworthy that the Byzantines were quick to learn of the attempts which Symeon of Bulgaria appears to have made to form ties with the Pechenegs around 916. Patriarch Nicholas Mysticus scolded Symeon for this in one of his letters to him : reports were coming in «daily and continually» from the governor of Cherson concerning Symeon's overtures to the Pechenegs. Furthermore, no less than 16 messengers had arrived from the Pechenegs themselves, reporting the «feelers» which Symeon had put out to them. ¹⁶⁶ Symeon's efforts - whatever his precise intentions may have been - were in vain. His or-

¹⁶⁵ *Incerti Scriptoris Liber de Re Militari*, ed. R. Vári, p. 29.

¹⁶⁶ Nicholas Mysticus, *Letters*, ed. R.J.H. Jenkins and L.G. Westerink, pp. 58-59.

ganization of regular contacts, communications system and means of gratifying the Pechenegs were no match for Byzantium's. It says much for the efficiency of Byzantine diplomacy that within less than 20 years the Pechenegs should have been transformed from allies of Symeon¹⁶⁷ into the lynchpin of Byzantium's northern diplomacy. Byzantium may well also have kept Symeon and the Viking Rus' apart. For when Symeon finally resolved on all-out war with Byzantium and sought the sea-power essential for an assault on Constantinople, he sought ships not from the Rus', or from the Croats, but from the far more distant Fatimids and from the emir of Tarsus.¹⁶⁸ In fact, the Byzantines confidently threatened Symeon with an attack by the Rus', among other northern peoples!¹⁶⁹ The principal purpose of the very generous trading concessions granted to the Rus' around 907, and expanded and systematized in 911,¹⁷⁰ may have been to separate the Rus' interests from those of Symeon and to dissuade the Rus' from putting their boats at Symeon's disposal.

The monitoring of events in the Balkans and the Black Sea steppe continued through the 11th century. In 1016, John Vladislav, the Bulgarian rebel leader, sought to call in the Pechenegs against the Byzantine forces. His efforts were detected by the commander of Dristra, and effective steps were taken to forestall the formation of an alliance between the Bulgarians and the Pechenegs.¹⁷¹ When in 1084 Traulos, the leader of a community of «Manichaeans» in Thrace led an uprising, he, too, sought an alliance with the Pechenegs, who were now established in the Danubian plain. Traulos was, in fact, successful, but Alexius was aware of developments. «Receiving each day re-

¹⁶⁷ Const. Porph., (*DAI*, pp. 166-167, 172-173, 176-177) indicates that Symeon, in alliance with the Pechenegs, laid waste the Magyars' land c. 896: *DAI: Commentary*, p. 144. The Byzantines' achievement, was partly, but not wholly, due to their greater wealth for bribes. On Bulgaria's lack of any coinage or of natural reserves of precious metals, see R. Browning, *Byzantium and Bulgaria* (London 1975) p. 111.

¹⁶⁸ A.A. Vasiliev, *Byzance et les Arabes*, II, pt. 1 (Brussels 1968) pp. 251-254; *ibid.*, II, pt. 2 (Brussels 1950) pp. 32, 148; R. Browning, *Byzantium*, p. 66.

¹⁶⁹ Nicholas Mysticus, *Letters*, pp. 158-161.

¹⁷⁰ H.R. Ellis Davidson, *The Viking road to Byzantium* (London 1976) pp. 89, 92, 94; A.N. Sakharov, *Diplomatiya Drevney Rusi*, pp. 124-128.

¹⁷¹ Scyl., ed. Thurn, pp. 355-356; P. Diaconu, *Petchénègues au Bas-Danube*, p. 39, n. 98

ports on what was about to happen», Alexius took great pains to win over Traulos by «conciliatory letters full of promises», even pledging an amnesty. Traulos was, admittedly, unmoved, and continued to instigate Pecheneg raids on the Empire. But, as Anna Comnena observes, Alexius at first accorded low priority to the Manichaeans' rising, being preoccupied with the Norman threat.¹⁷²

When the Byzantine armed forces were able to concentrate on one front, under capable leadership, they put the information garnered by Byzantine intelligence to formidable use. John Tzimiskēs' campaign against Svyatoslav on the Danube ended in splendid military victories.¹⁷³ But it is easily overlooked that the ground for them was laid by careful intelligence work and assiduous diplomatic manoeuvring. Tzimiskēs, before his attack on the Rus', sent to their camps «men who were bilingual and dressed in Scythian clothing, to find out their intentions».¹⁷⁴ Svyatoslav had allied with the Pechenegs and Magyars for his Danubian campaign.¹⁷⁵ Seeing that they are not mentioned as aiding him during the later stages of the campaign, they had very probably been suborned by Byzantine agents and induced to desert Svyatoslav. The Rus' on the Danube suffered severely from lack of manpower to the extent that, according to John Scylitzes, the women put on armour and took up weapons.¹⁷⁶ In fact, the drastic cut in the enemy's numbers through the desertion of the nomads may well have been a precondition for Tzimiskēs' military actions. The Russians' suspicions about Byzantine guile, expressed in connexion with Svyatoslav's campaign, were not ill-founded.¹⁷⁷

¹⁷² Anna Comnena, *Alexiad*, VI, 4, 5, Leib, II, pp. 49, 50; Sew., pp. 187, 188.

¹⁷³ R.J.H. Jenkins, *Byzantium. The imperial centuries* (London 1966) pp. 295-298; G. Ostrogorsky, *History of the Byzantine State* (Oxford 1968²) pp. 295-296; H.R. Ellis Davidson, *Viking road*, pp. 115-116, 137-147.

¹⁷⁴ Leo the Deacon, *Historia*, ed. C.B. Hase (Bonn, 1828) p. 108. For Tzimiskēs' effective use of scouts, cf. *ibid.*, p. 130.

¹⁷⁵ Leo the Deacon, *Historia*, ed. Hase, p. 108; Scyl., ed. Thurn, pp. 288-290.

¹⁷⁶ Scyl., ed. Thurn, p. 305. The isolation of the Rus' from nearby potential allies who refused them aid is attributed to these peoples' «fear of the Romans»: Scyl., ed. Thurn, p. 305; for the desertions of Bulgarians to the Byzantines, see Leo the Deacon, *Historia*, p. 139. The *Russian Primary Chronicle* corroborates the Byzantine sources' indications that the Rus' were acutely short of men in the closing stages of the campaign: *Povest' s.a.* 971, p. 51; Cross, p. 89.

¹⁷⁷ See above.

Byzantine sea power, for all its shortcomings, gave the Empire a valuable means of speedy communication, enabling it to orchestrate its diplomatic initiatives over a wide area, and rapidly to exploit opportune developments in districts near the sea. Such a means of conducting diplomacy, and gaining up-to-date information, was not available to even the most advanced of its northern or western neighbours. One of the missions sent regularly to the Pechenegs sailed directly to those who roamed between the Dnieper and the Dniester : the imperial agent conducting the mission «may, without going to Cherson, shortly and swiftly find these... Pechenegs». ¹⁷⁸ Constantine's wording in this passage, and the attention which he pays elsewhere to the names of the rivers, make it possible to suggest that the *chelandia* actually went up the rivers in quest of the Pechenegs, as far as the ships' draughts allowed. ¹⁷⁹ The Byzantines also benefitted from their naval presence in the Central Mediterranean. The famous events at Capo delle Colonne in Calabria in 982 illustrate this. Otto II was defeated by the Saracens there, and had to flee to the beach. Two Byzantine *chelandia* were anchored there, just offshore. Otto managed to reach, and clamber aboard, one of them. It is remarkable that they should have been anchored at that particular spot on the Calabrian coast. It is still more notable that the Byzantines discovered, after three days' questioning, that despite all his denials the fugitive was really the emperor Otto II. A contemporary Venetian chronicler was puzzled that the Byzantines, «most skilled in intellect, by I know not what signs», discovered their guest's true identity. ¹⁸⁰ Byzantine intelligence may well have been at work here, monitoring the movements of Otto's army, and gathering the information which eventually made possible his identification. According to the Venetian chronicler, John the Deacon, the Byzantines

¹⁷⁸ Const. Porph., *DAI*, pp. 54-55.

¹⁷⁹ Const. Porph., *DAI*, pp. 174-175, 184-185; *DAI: Commentary*, p. 155. Const.'s indication that the Pechenegs' abode «is called after the name of the local rivers» corresponds with other evidence of steppe nomads' frequenting of river valleys: see above, p. 280. The draught of a *dromon* laden with marines and equipment is estimated to have totalled only approximately 1.5 m.: E. Eickhoff, *Seekrieg und Seepolitik zwischen Islam und Abendland* (Berlin 1966) p. 146.

¹⁸⁰ John the Deacon, *Chronicum Venetum*, in: *Cronache Veneziane Antichissime*, ed. G. Monticolo, *Fonti per la Storia d'Italia* (Rome 1890) p. 145; Thietmar of Merseburg, *Chronicon*, ed. R. Holtzmann, pp. 124-129; J. Gay, *L'Italie méridionale et l'empire byzantin* (Paris 1904) p. 338.

would have shipped Otto back to Constantinople, had Otto not managed to dive overboard and swim ashore.¹⁸¹ In this way, the close surveillance of events, assisted by a very small number of ships, could yield, or almost yield, colossal dividends - the detention of an intrusive barbarian ruler at the imperial court. Some years earlier, Pandulf Iron-Head, Prince of Capua and Benevento, had been seized while besieging Bovino and shipped to Constantinople. There, he had been induced to cooperate with the emperor, and sent back to Italy. He proceeded to act, for a while, in the capacity of an intermediary between John Tzimiskes and Otto I.¹⁸² In such a *volte-face*, Byzantium's swift sea communications and the blandishments of the imperial court played an important part.

Close observation of their neighbours also enabled the Byzantines swiftly to take political initiatives to counteract or exploit new developments. The Saxon emperors' interest in gaining influence, and some form of authority, over Venice disturbed the Byzantines, who regarded the Venetians as their *douloi*.¹⁸³ In 1004, Emperor Henry II, following the aspirations of his predecessors, sought to form personal ties with the Venetian ruling family. He successfully requested Doge Peter II Orseolo to send one of his sons to him at Verona. Henry spon-

¹⁸¹ John the Deacon, *Chronicum*, pp. 145-146. The two *chelandia* are alleged by Thietmar (*Chronicum*, pp. 126-129) to have been enlisted by Otto earlier in the campaign to discharge Greek Fire at the Saracens' boats. This version is accepted by E. Eickhoff, *Seekrieg*, p. 366. But it is not necessarily more trustworthy than John the Deacon's, which is earlier in date. John gives no indication of any previous cooperation between the Germans and the two *chelandia*. Had Otto himself made arrangements with these *chelandia*, he would presumably have been more easily recognized by the Greek sailors. Cf. J. Gay, *L'Italie méridionale*, pp. 336, n. 2; 338.

¹⁸² J. Gay, *L'Italie méridionale*, pp. 313-314, 316-318. Gay emphasizes that the arrangement was to Pandulf's advantage, and argues that it was made at his initiative. But it is noteworthy that thereafter Pandulf ceased to molest Byzantine Apulia ever again (*ibid.*, p. 322). The surprising degree of faith placed in Pandulf by Tzimiskes in 970 may have been due to his confidence in the effects of bribes and blandishments upon him rather than, as Gay avers, to Pandulf's exaggeration of his influence over Otto and of Otto's strength (*ibid.*, pp. 316-317).

¹⁸³ H. Antoniadis-Bibicou, argues that *douloi/servi* had no «technical» sense in the 1082 or 1147 chrysobulls, and merely denoted cooperative allies: «Note sur les relations de Byzance avec Venise», *Thesaurismata* 1 (1962) pp. 176-177. But the use of the term must imply a claim to some form of hegemony, however vague. Anyway, it was definitely against Byzantine interests for Venice to fall under the sway of any other power.

sored the confirmation of the boy, who became his namesake, and sent him home «richly endowed with presents». The fact that the Byzantine government countered this move by insisting on the marriage of Peter II's most important son, John, to a Byzantine princess has rightly been emphasized by K. Leyser.¹⁸⁴ But one may underline still further the alacrity with which Byzantium reacted to Henry II's initiative. According to John the Deacon, «At this very time»¹⁸⁵ (of the confirmation) the emperors Basil and Constantine «compelled» Doge Peter «by repeated requests» (*sedula petitione*) to send John to Constantinople where «they decreed» that he marry a girl from the Argyrus family, «of imperial stock». Steps were taken by the emperors «to speed the day of coupling».¹⁸⁶ The emperors had also summoned a younger brother of John, Otto, and they showered him, too, with presents. Some years earlier, in 996, Otto Orseolo had received the name, and become the godson, of Emperor Otto III.¹⁸⁷ I suggest that then, too, Byzantium's reaction had been quick. For it may well have been at Byzantium's initiative that in the year following Otto's confirmation, Doge Peter sent his son John to Constantinople, where he received «not only gifts but also excellent honours».¹⁸⁸ At least one of, and perhaps both, John Orseolo's visits to Constantinople represent rapid Byzantine countermeasures to German *démarches* towards Venice.

The alacrity with which the Byzantines could act upon the information they gathered is also indicated by Liudprand of Cremona. There is no strong reason for rejecting Liudprand's chronology of events in which he himself participated. He states that after the death of King Hugh of Provence, «the name of Berengar became famous,

¹⁸⁴ John the Deacon, *Chronicum*, p. 167; K. Leyser, «The tenth century in Byzantine-Western relationships», *Relations between East and West in the Middle Ages*, ed. D. Baker (Edinburgh 1973) pp. 31-32.

¹⁸⁵ «Huc quoque tempore», John the Deacon, *Chronicum*, pp. 167-168.

¹⁸⁶ The happy pair were married in a chapel or church in the imperial palace by the Patriarch, with Basil II and Constantine VIII holding the wedding crowns over their heads. Basil II kept John at Constantinople for some time. His actions seem to have been motivated by intense concern for a marriage-bond with the Orseolo family. The marriage was, in fact, soon consummated, for a child was born to Maria Argyra «not many days» after the return of the couple to Venice, *ibid.*, p. 169.

¹⁸⁷ *ibid.*, pp. 151-152; K. Leyser, *Byz.-Western relationships*, p. 31.

¹⁸⁸ John the Deacon, *Chronicum*, p. 154.

especially among the Greek peoples (*sic*). For he was chief man in Italy by merit, while Lothar was king only in name». Constantine VII, «hearing that Berengar surpassed Lothar in power, sent letters to Berengar». In one letter, he urged him «vehemently» to send an envoy to Constantinople, so that the envoy might be able to report back to Berengar on the magnitude of Constantine's love for him. In another letter, he urged Berengar to show due regard for King Lothar. Constantine was, allegedly, motivated by his love for his daughter-in-law, Bertha-Eudocia, the sister of Lothar.¹⁸⁹ Even so, in the circumstances his *démarche* amounted to a sharp relegation of Lothar to secondary importance. For Constantine's very act of honouring Berengar with an exchange of gifts and envoys might be expected considerably to enhance his prestige and thereby his authority. If we accept Liudprand's account, Constantine stayed loyal to King Hugh, his daughter-in-law's father, until Hugh's death. But he seems to have been aware that Hugh's power was ebbing. For he acted soon after Hugh's death in Arles, on April 10, 947, to make overtures to Berengar. By August 1, 949, Liudprand of Cremona was setting off from Pavia to undertake a mission on behalf of Berengar.¹⁹⁰ Berengar was, in fact, to prove no match for Otto I when Otto invaded Italy in 951. But he was to all appearances the «chief man in Italy». The Byzantines were quick to appraise the new situation, and to act upon it.

It is vain to seek to define any fixed policy in Constantine VII's actions. His aim was simply to cultivate the leading potentate, or potentates, of the day in Northern and Central Italy, in the hope that they would concur with Byzantium's general ideology of preeminence and that they would assist in the maintenance of Byzantium's interests in the South.¹⁹¹ Constantine had special ties of marriage with Hugh, but a

¹⁸⁹ Liudprand, *Antapodosis*, VI, 2, Becker, pp. 152-153; Wright, p. 206.

¹⁹⁰ Liudprand, *Antapodosis*, VI, 4, Becker, p. 153; Wright, p. 207. King Hugh had withdrawn to Provence from Italy after April, 946, leaving his son Lothar under Berengar's tutelage. The Byzantines seem still to have been counting on a resurgence in the power of Hugh, who was planning to return to Italy at the time of his death: L.M. Hartmann, *Geschichte Italiens im Mittelalter*, III, pt. 2 (Gotha 1911) pp. 235-236 and n. 15 on p. 242.

¹⁹¹ J. Gay, *L'Italie méridionale*, p. 226; K. Leyser, *Byz.-Western relationships* pp. 36-38; M. Arbagi, «Byzantium, Germany, the *regnum italicum* and the Magyars in the tenth century», *Byzantine Studies/Etudes byzantines* 6 (1979) pp. 37-38.

multiplicity of rival potentates in Italy was not necessarily unwelcome to him : «Divide and rule» could be practised towards western, as well as northern, neighbours. It is, I believe, discernible in Byzantium's handling of Otto I in the decade or so before 955, the year in which his victory over the Magyars and the death of his brother Henry transformed Otto's position in Germany. For it seems to me that Constantine was seeking a counterweight to Otto, in attempting to wed Romanus II Porphyrogenitus to Hadwig, the beautiful daughter of Henry, Duke of Bavaria.¹⁹²

The two or more embassies sent to the Saxon court in the 940s must have acquainted the imperial government with the existence of a niece of Otto and with the fact that she was approaching marriageable age. Perhaps they also reported back that she had some knowledge of Greek. For Constantine VII seems to have moved quickly when Romanus II was bereaved in 949, probably in the latter half of the year.¹⁹³ Either in the next year or in 951, the Byzantine proposal for a marriage between Romanus II and Hadwig was made. This was just two or three years after Hadwig's father had become Duke of Bavaria,¹⁹⁴ and at a time when Berengar's power was on the rise, to the point where he had himself crowned king of Italy on December 15, 950. I suggest that there is a connexion between these phenomena. Byzantium was trying to «build bridges» with a variety of potentates in a manner analogous to its cultivation of the chieftains and princes of the peoples living north of the Black Sea. At the same time as sending embassies to Otto and Berengar, Constantine VII was quite intensively forging ties with Magyar chieftains. In c. 949 Bulcsu, chieftain of

¹⁹² Ekkehard IV, *Casus Sancti Galli*, MGH SS, II (Hanover 1839) pp. 122-123. On this work, see W. Wattenbach and R. Holtzmann, *Deutschlands Geschichtsquellen im Mittelalter*, I, pt. 4 (Berlin 1939) pp. 238-239. Cf. W. Ohnsorge, *Byzanz und das Abendland*, pp. 235, n. 39; 250; K. Leyser, *Byz.-Western relationships*, p. 41.

¹⁹³ Bertha is said to have lived «for five years» after her marriage to Romanus, which occurred in September, 944: Theophanes Continuatus, *Chronographia*, VI, 46, ed. I. Bekker (Bonn, 1838) p. 431; George Monachus Continuatus, *ibid.*, p. 917. Bishop Sigefrid of Parma, who had escorted Bertha to Constantinople for her wedding, was still in the City in December, 944: Liudprand, *Antapodosis*, V, 20, 21, Becker, pp. 141-143; Wright, pp. 189-190. Cf. R.J.H. Jenkins, *DAI: Commentary*, p. 87.

¹⁹⁴ *Regesten des Kaiserreiches unter Heinrich I und Otto I, 919-973*, ed. E. von Ottenthal and H. Kaminsky (Hildesheim 1967) no. 174^A, p. 85; K. Leyser, *Ottonian Saxony*, p. 23, n. 36 on p. 159.

the prominent Horka tribe, visited Constantinople, was baptized, became Constantine's godson, and received the title of *patrikios*. Two or three years later, similar honours were meted out to another chieftain, Gyula. He was baptized at Constantinople and received the title of *patrikios*.¹⁹⁵ It has very reasonably been suggested that Constantine VII regarded the Magyar leaders as potential instruments of a policy of distracting or intimidating Otto I.¹⁹⁶ I suggest that Constantine was pursuing a similar goal in his overtures towards Duke Henry of Bavaria. His daughter, Hadwig, was the only marriageable female of the Liudolfing house at the time, and it is usually thought that this fact alone dictated Constantine's choice of her. This is not incompatible with the suggestion that Constantine hoped, by forming a marriage-tie, to gain Henry's good-will and future cooperation, and thereby a means of influence or pressure upon Otto I. The royal formula of address in the *De Cerimoniis* for the Bavarian Duke, *rhêx Baïourê*, seems to reflect Byzantine awareness of Bavaria's special status. It also suggests that correspondence with Dukes of Bavaria was frequent enough for the formula of address to be deemed worthy of insertion in the list of addresses.¹⁹⁷ The Byzantines may well also have been aware of Duke

¹⁹⁵ Scyl., ed. Thurn, p. 239; G. Moravcsik, *Byzantium and the Magyars*, pp. 104, 106.

¹⁹⁶ M. Arbagi, *Byzantium, Germany, regnum italicum*, pp. 44-46. The case may be substantially strengthened by the fact that Nicholas Mysticus threatened Symeon of Bulgaria with a Magyar attack in the 920s: Nicholas, *Letters*, ed. Jenkins and Westerink, pp. 160-161. Furthermore, repeated mentions of the Magyars («Tourkoi») occur in the *DAI*. That the interest in the Magyars' recent history, geographical location and customs is not merely a mark of Porphyrogenitan pedantry is indicated by the fact that they are singled out, with the Rus' and the Khazars, from among the «greedy» northern peoples seeking marriage alliances and gifts of imperial vestments (*DAI*, pp. 66-67). Diplomatic exchanges with the Magyars cannot have been rare. One such contact is recorded in *DAI*, pp. 178-179: «Tebelis is dead, and it is his son Termatzous who came here recently as 'friend' with Boulzoz (Bulcsu), third prince and *karchas* of Tourkia (Hungary)». See G. Moravcsik in *DAI: Commentary*, p. 153; *idem*, *Byzantium and the Magyars*, p. 56; Philotheus, *Kletorologion*, in N. Oikonomides, *Listes de préséance*, pp. 208-209.

¹⁹⁷ Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *De Cerimoniis*, II, 48, ed. J.J. Reiske, I (Bonn 1829) p. 689; W. Ohnsorge, *Abendland und Byzanz*, pp. 36, 235; K. Leyser, *Byz.-Western relationships*, p. 35 and n. 40; *idem*, *Ottoman Saxony*, pp. 17-18, 33. Surprisingly little attention has been paid to the description by Ruotger of Duke Henry as «formidable to the barbarians and to all the peoples of those parts, even to the Greeks themselves»: Ruotger, *Vita Brunonis*, ch. 17, ed. I. Ott, *MGH SS, nov. ser.*, X (Weimar 1951) pp. 15-16. The phraseology is partially borrowed from Boethius (*Consolat.*

Henry's very turbulent past. He had led a major revolt against his elder brother in 939, and had been involved in an assassination plot against him in 941. It is no exaggeration to say that Constantine seized on the opportunity presented by his son's bereavement which occurred in, probably, the latter half of 949. He may well have acted not merely out of respect for Henry's power, but in the hope that he might serve as a counterweight to Otto I.¹⁹⁸ Byzantium could not prevent the rise of powerful warlords far beyond its borders. But it could temper their power by forming ties with such other potentates as were available in the area.

Even if a ruler's relations with Byzantium were unreservedly amicable, he was liable to be jettisoned or relegated to secondary status if his power waned or proved wanting. King Lothar suffered such a relegation in the late 940s. Byzantium's *Realpolitik* is also apparent in its treatment of the son of Berengar, King Adalbert, in 968. According to Liudprand, a Byzantine mission was sent to Italy with instructions to liaise with Adalbert, if he proved to have the military capability which he had pledged. If he did not, he was to be seized and he, together with the money earmarked for him, was to be handed over to Otto I!¹⁹⁹ This is less an instance of Byzantine «infidelity», as Liudprand alleges,²⁰⁰ than of the imperial government's reluctance to commit itself unreservedly to any one barbarian potentate, and of its readiness ruthlessly to switch a policy to accord with events outside its control. If one of the Byzantines' strengths was their assiduity in gathering data about foreign peoples and their rulers, another was their awareness of the limitations on their ability to direct events far beyond their frontiers.

Philosoph., II, 7, 8); but the passage clearly indicates direct relations between Duke Henry and Byzantium.

¹⁹⁸ See above, n. 193. K. Leyser regards Otto I as complaisant towards his brother's special status after their final reconciliation, and as furthering Henry's interests. But he also notes that «the Bavarian Liudolfings never forgot their regal claims»: *Ottoman Saxony*, pp. 16-17;

¹⁹⁹ Liudprand, *Legatio*, ch. 29, 30, Becker, pp. 190-191; Wright, pp. 251-253; M. Arbagi, *Byzantium, Germany, regnum italicum*, pp. 47-48. The technique whereby Adalbert, even if he provided the promised forces, was to be kept a virtual hostage in Bari during the ensuing campaign, is comparable to the taking of Pecheneg hostages: see above, p. 279. For another, less drastic, policy option enjoined to an expedition commander, see below, p.

²⁰⁰ Liudprand, *Legatio*, ch. 30, Becker, p. 191; Wright, p. 253.

The imperial government sought to form relations with second- and third-ranking figures of barbarian political structures, as well as with the leaders. These ties, together with detailed knowledge about a ruler's tastes and habits, could assist imperial diplomats in exploiting his weaknesses. In, apparently, the winter of 918-919, Nicholas Mysticus wrote a letter to the archbishop of Bulgaria, requesting him to induce Symeon to make peace with Byzantium. In the letter, Nicholas hints that excommunication would prove a potent means of threatening Symeon : «You have the holy churches into which he goes to commune with God on behalf of himself, his wife, his children...; you have the holy and all-immaculate Body and Blood, which as he eats and drinks he has undoubting hopes that he is partaking of sanctification».²⁰¹ At the same time, Nicholas wrote to «the chief man (*tô prôtô anthrôpô*) of Symeon». He flattered him on his intimacy with Symeon, and urged him, too, to persuade Symeon to make peace.²⁰² Byzantium's desire for direct contacts with secondary, but influential, figures may also be seen in the generous gifts which were despatched not only to Hugh of Provence, King of Italy, but also to 6 bishops and 7 «counts» who were deemed to be under his authority. This was in 935, at the time of the expedition which he was expected to lead against the rebellious Lombard princes. An especially lavish donation was made to the «count and marquess of the same king, who is a neighbour of the theme of Longibardia», the margrave of Spoleto. The Byzantine expedition-commander was instructed to pay King Hugh, even if he did not lead the army in person. But the payment was to be made only after the King's army had defeated the rebel princes and handed back to the Byzantines the «forts» (*kastra*) which they claimed. The payment was to be made through the soldiers whom Hugh had sent. The calculation in these arrangements was, surely, not only «payment by results» but also that the «counts» who would lead the army would receive their gifts first, and be the more beholden to the Empire.²⁰³

There was also some design of forming links with the middle éche-

²⁰¹ Nicholas Mysticus, *Letters*, ed. Westerink and Jenkins, pp. 86-87.

²⁰² Nicholas Mysticus, *Letters*, pp. 88-91.

²⁰³ Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *De Cerimoniis*, II, 44, ed. Reiske, I, pp. 661-662; J. Gay, *L'Italie méridionale*, p. 211; K. Leyser, *Byz.-Western relationships*, pp. 39-40

lons of Robert Guiscard's régime, judging by the marriage-agreement concerning his daughter and the son of Michael VII. By the terms of the agreement, 43 titles, with their concomitant *rhogai*, were to be granted by the emperor. Many purple vestments were also conceded, in addition to those bestowed with the titles.²⁰⁴ Michael VII had to delegate to Guiscard the right to confer the titles to whomsoever he wished. This privilege, and the fact that especially generous payments of gold and gifts of vestments were made with the titles, indicates that the terms were not of Byzantium's choosing.²⁰⁵ Even so, these donations formed links between the emperor and many members of Robert's entourage, which were annually invigorated by the payment of the appropriate *rhoga*. They might be expected to dampen the enthusiasm of at least some Norman notables for renewed hostilities against the Empire.²⁰⁶ By the very dispensation of gifts, the emperor could arouse at least suspicion on a ruler's part concerning the loyalties of those of his subjects who received them. The lengths to which an emperor might go to arouse such suspicion is shown by Anna Comnena's account of Alexius' intrigues against Bohemond in 1108. Having discovered who were Bohemond's trustiest followers, he composed letters thanking them for letters which were in fact utterly fictitious : «One would suppose, on reading them, that these men had written to the emperor, trying to win his friendship and disclosing the secret intentions of Bohemond». The letters of Alexius also promised «gifts and imperial bounty».²⁰⁷ Alexius arranged that these letters should fall into Bohemond's hands. This act of «disinformation» failed to stir up the hoped for discord, for Bohemond seems to have suspected the authenticity of the letters' contents. But it shows what dissension Byzantine diplomacy sought to sow even without the actual distribution of gifts. *A fortiori* would the actual recipients of «gifts and imperial bounty» be

²⁰⁴ Michael Psellus, *Scripta Minora*, I, ed. E. Kurtz and F. Drexler, pp. 331-332; H. Antoniadis-Bibicou, «Michel VII Doukas et Robert Guiscard et la pension des dignitaires», *B* 29-30 (1959-1960) pp. 63, 64-65.

²⁰⁵ The agreement indicates plainly that the concessions of titles had been made only after protracted discussions: Psellus, *Scripta Minora*, I, p. 332; H. Ant.-Bibicou, *Michel VII Doukas et Robert Guiscard*, pp. 70, 75.

²⁰⁶ H. Ant.-Bibicou, *Michel VII Doukas et Robert Guiscard*, pp. 50, 68, 74.

²⁰⁷ Anna Comnena, *Alexiad*, XIII, 4, Leib, III, pp. 102-103; Sew., pp. 406-407.

regarded by their rulers with unease.

The Byzantines did not always use their grants of gifts and titles as a means with which to practise «Divide and Rule». Alexius I had every reason to hope that his grant of titles and gifts to Emperor Henry IV would strengthen Henry in his conflict with Robert Guiscard and Gregory VII. Besides lavish gifts of gold and purple silks, 20 titles, with corresponding *rhogai*, were bestowed on subordinates of the German emperor.²⁰⁸ According to Anna Comnena, Alexius «knew that the king of Germany was more powerful than all the other rulers [of the West], and better able to achieve whatever he should wish against Robert».²⁰⁹ Neither the awareness of Henry's power nor the grant of such gifts and titles is, perhaps, surprising. But the finesse with which at least one of the gifts was made is remarkable. According to the *Vita Heinrici Imperatoris*, a magnificent golden altar table (*tabula altaris*) was sent by the Byzantine emperor for the embellishment of Henry's favourite church at Speyer, «since he knew that the [German] emperor's enthusiasm and devotion burned strongly for the monastery at Speyer».²¹⁰ Judging by the favourable tone of the author of the *Vita*, the gift gained good-will for Alexius. It was «most worthy both of him who sent it and of him who received it».²¹¹ Such finesse was made possible by the gathering of small, seemingly inconsequential pieces of information about Henry IV's predilections. Similar care had been taken with Henry's father, a man who prided himself on his allegedly Greek ancestry. According to Jocundus, in his preface to the *Translatio Sancti Servatii*, Henry III was especially interested in the cult of St Servatius, and sought some of his relics for his new foundation, the monastery of Sts Symeon and Jude at Goslar. At Mainz in October 1049, the genealogy of St Servatius was debated before the emperor, and the authenticity of the existing version was questioned. «But by the Will of the Almighty there arrived certain Greeks, all full of wisdom,... sent

²⁰⁸ Anna Comnena, *Alexiad*, III, 10, Leib, I, p. 134; Sew., p. 127. The names of the titles, and the role of Henry IV in their apportionment, are not specified. See F. Dölger, *Regesten der Kaiserurkunden des oströmischen Reiches*, I, pt. 2 (Munich 1925), no. 1077, p. 26.

²⁰⁹ Anna Comnena, *Alexiad*, III, 10, Leib, I, p. 133; Sew., p. 126.

²¹⁰ *Vita Heinrici Imperatoris*, in: *Quellen zur Geschichte Heinrichs IV.*, ed. F.-J. Schmale (Darmstadt 1963) pp. 412-415.

²¹¹ *Vita Heinrici*, ed. F.-J. Schmale, pp. 414-415.

by the emperor of Constantinople». They confirmed that the existing genealogy was correct, «and without delay related many wondrous things..., not without the authority of the Fathers».²¹² Presumably, the Byzantine government was aware of Henry III's pious inclinations, and included in its mission to him a person, or persons, who were qualified to cope with such a contingency as this, and to cite convincingly from the Church Fathers. This incident therefore seems to represent the Byzantines' exploitation of their knowledge about barbarian rulers.²¹³

This mission to Mainz also courted individuals of eminent, but not paramount, rank. Adam of Bremen indicates that the envoys in 1049 flattered Archbishop Adalbert of Hamburg-Bremen. They are said to have congratulated him on his wise counsel and loyalty in advising Henry III.²¹⁴ Another influential German churchman who caught the eye of imperial diplomats was Archbishop Anno of Cologne. According to the *Annolied*, he was sent gifts by «the kings of the Greeks and the English».²¹⁵ For only one year was he sole regent of Germany, during Henry IV's minority. It is not clear that this was the time when he received gifts from Byzantium. But whenever the one or more despatches of gifts occurred, they offer another example of the Byzantines' cultivation of the prominent, as well as of the crowned. Their purpose was not always «Divide and rule». In the case of Adalbert and Anno, the Byzantines' purpose was probably to court influential persons who were, or might become, the power behind the throne.

The imperial diplomats' long scan also discerned the emergence of potentates distant enough to pose no threat to Byzantine territory, but powerful enough to be able to affect the Empire's interests. An

²¹² Jocundus, *Praefatio: Translatio Sancti Servatii*, MGH SS, XII (Hanover 1856) pp. 90, 107. See W. Ohnsorge, *Abendland und Byzanz*, pp. 317, 321, 330; K. Leyser, *Byz.-Western relationships*, p. 46.

²¹³ As an example of their exploitation of baser appetites, see Liudprand's allegation that Romanus I, «knowing Alberic's cupidity, sent him very ample presents...»: *Legatio*, ch. 62, Becker, p. 209; Wright, p. 274.

²¹⁴ Adam of Bremen, *Gesta Hammaburgensis Ecclesiae Pontificum*, III, 32, ed. B. Schmeidler, MGH in usum schol. (Hanover 1917) p. 174; W. Ohnsorge, *Abendland und Byzanz*, p. 318; F. Dölger, *Regesten der Kaiserurkunden*, I, pt. 2, no. 896, p. 9.

²¹⁵ *Annolied*, ed. M. Roediger, MGH *Scriptores qui vernacula lingua usi sunt*, I (Hanover 1895) col. 637, p. 128.

example of their long reach is the despatch of at least one mission to William the Bastard, while he was still merely Duke of Normandy. For a contemporary writer, William of Poitiers, states that Byzantium wished to have William as «a neighbour and friend». William of Poitiers is referring to the period before the Norman conquest of England in 1066. The purpose of the mission seems to have been to request the despatch of Norman warriors to serve with the imperial forces.²¹⁶ The request was presumably in the form of, or accompanied by, flattering letters and gifts. There is circumstantial evidence which suggests that contacts with King William were maintained after 1066.²¹⁷ To this evidence may be added a reference to King Williams's crown in the so-called *Carmen de Hastingae Proelio*.

This work seems to have been composed during the second quarter of the 12th century, and has been described by R.H.C. Davis as «a literary exercise [rather than] a serious historical source».²¹⁸ It is true that the five passages in the *Carmen* depicting scenes of the Conquest which are not related elsewhere are poor, if not totally lacking in historical content.²¹⁹ But it is possible that there is a grain of truth in the *Carmen*'s allusion to the making of a golden crown for William by a «Greek» craftsman, in preparation for his coronation on Christmas Day, 1066.²²⁰ R.H.C. Davis states that the poem's description of the coronation and the crown jewels «is surely the sort of hotch-potch that one would have expected of a poet if he had no special knowledge», and was writing overseas, in Northern France or Southern Flanders.²²¹ It must be added that the poet seems to have borrowed his description of the crown from the characteristics of the «imperial crown» of the German emperor.²²² It may nonetheless be questioned whether the

²¹⁶ William of Poitiers, *Gesta Guillelmi Ducis*, ed. R. Foreville (Paris 1952) pp. 144-145.

²¹⁷ J. Shepard, «The English and Byzantium», *Traditio* 29 (1973) pp. 73-74, 78-80.

²¹⁸ R.H.C. Davis, «The *Carmen de Hastingae Proelio*», *EHR* 367 (1978) pp. 256, 259, 261. Arguments in favour of a possible earlier dating are presented by L.J. Engels, «The *Carmen de Hastingae Proelio*», *Proceedings of the Battle Conference on Anglo-Norman Studies* 2 (1979) pp. 12-13.

²¹⁹ R.H.C. Davis, *The Carmen*, pp. 248-251.

²²⁰ *The Carmen de Hastingae Proelio*, ed. C. Morton and H. Muntz (Oxford 1972) pp. 48-49.

²²¹ R.H.C. Davis, *The Carmen*, pp. 251, 261.

²²² The crown is said to have been adorned with 12 precious stones, topmost of which was a pearl: *Carmen de Hastingae Proelio*, ed. Morton and Muntz, pp. 48-51; P.E. Schramm, *Herrschaftszeichen*

Carmen's repeated references to the crown as a *stemma* and as a *diadema* are inspired merely by the desire to aggrandize the Conqueror.²²³ It is noteworthy that William I, in the early years of his reign, was occasionally accredited, and perhaps even acclaimed, with the title of *basileus* which his Anglo-Saxon predecessors had affected.²²⁴ At about the same time, the Byzantine emperor was sending what seems to have been a crown to King Geza of Hungary.²²⁵ That crown, too, might reasonably have been termed a *diadema*. The possibility should not be ruled out that some message of congratulation was sent by the imperial government to William after his conquest of England, or even that a crown may have been sent with the message.²²⁶

In any case, the imperial government undoubtedly made contact with Duke William when he was merely a rising magnate in Northern Francia, and it seems to have maintained its links with him after 1066. It also kept up links with a potentate of Northern Europe who was a

und Staatssymbolik, II (Stuttgart 1955) pp. 393-394; R. Staats, *Theologie der Reichskrone*, pp. 65, 73-75.

²²³ *Carmen de Hastings Proelio*, ed. Morton and Munz, pp. 48-51.

²²⁴ W. de Gray Birch, *Index of the styles and titles of the Sovereigns of England*, *First Annual Report of the Index Society* (London 1879) pp. 14, 22; D.C. Douglas, *William the Conqueror* (London 1966) p. 251 and n. 4; J. Le Patourel, *The Norman Empire* (Oxford 1976) p. 323, n. 1. For the acclamation of, seemingly, William, as «Anglorum nostrum... basileum», see E.H. Kantorowicz, *Laudes regiae* (Berkeley 1958) p. 172, n. 67. I am most grateful to George Garnett of Queens' College, Cambridge, for the first and last of these references.

²²⁵ D. Obolensky, *Byz. Commonwealth*, pp. 159-160 and note; G. Moravcsik, *Byzantium and the Magyars*, pp. 66, 68. On crowns, and their significance at Byzantium, see O. Treitinger, *Oström. Reichsidee*, p. 203 ff. Suggestive evidence that silks and an enamelled cross-encolpion may have been sent to Edward the Confessor is presented by K. Ciggaar, «England and Byzantium on the eve of the Norman conquest», *Proceedings of the Battle Conference on Anglo-Norman Studies* 5 (1982), pp. 90-92, 95.

²²⁶ If a crown really was made at Byzantium and despatched to William, it cannot have had the imperial characteristics described by the *Carmen*. But that William's aspirations to imperial status involved a crown of the sort worn by Byzantine and Salian emperors is indicated by Type II of his coins. These show him full-face, wearing a double-hooped crown, from which *pendilia* hang down over his ears: P. Schramm, *Herrschaftszeichen*, pp. 394-395. See G.C. Brooke, *Catalogue of English coins in the British Museum: the Norman kings*, I (London 1916), «Type II», pl. IV-VI; J.J. North, *English hammered coins*, I (London 1963) pp. 24, 140, and pl. XII; D.C. Douglas, *William the Conqueror*, p. 253, n. 3; J. Le Patourel, *Norman Empire*, p. 241, n. 3.

former employee of the emperor, Harald Hardraada. It would, I think, be wrong to dismiss as rhetoric or wishful thinking the statement of Cecaumenos concerning Hardraada's conduct after he had returned from Byzantium and become king of Norway in 1047. According to Cecaumenos, «he did not grumble that he had (only) been honoured with the title of *manglabitēs* or *spatharocandidatus*, but rather, even when he was king, he preserved fidelity and friendship towards the Romans». ²²⁷ This statement clearly suggests that relations between Harald and Byzantium were maintained in the years between his return to Norway and his death at Stamford Bridge in 1066. The way in which he gave tangible proof of his continuing «fidelity and friendship» may well have lain in the despatch of mercenaries. He may thus be partly responsible for the sizeable numbers of «Varangian» warriors who fought in Byzantium's civil and foreign wars in the mid-11th century. ²²⁸ Byzantium perhaps kept green its ties with Harald through annual payment of the *rhoga* corresponding to his title of *spatharocandidatus*.

One cannot gauge whether Harald's «fidelity» was inspired by abiding awe for the court ceremonial, gratitude for titles or gold, or simply the desire to rid himself of troublesome mercenaries through sending them to Byzantium. At any rate, William of Normandy and Harald Hardraada serve as examples of distant potentates with whom the Empire bothered to maintain relations. In both cases, the pains taken seem to have yielded tangible benefits, in the form of additional mercenaries.

.....

Byzantine diplomacy was painstaking in collecting information about numerous barbarian potentates, and about their political circumstances. Its scan encompassed the Balkans, the steppe- and forest-zones north of the Black Sea, Italy, Central and Northern Europe. The energy, and even enterprise, with which the Byzantines monitored and courted potentates and prominent persons of varying ranks pose a con-

²²⁷ Cecaumenos, *Strategicon*, ed. G. G. Litavrin, pp. 284-285. See S. Blöndal and B. S. Benedikz, *The Varangians of Byzantium* (Cambridge 1978) p. 100.

²²⁸ S. Blöndal and B. S. Benedikz, *Varangians*, pp. 106-110.

trast to their often slow or muted military response to barbarian incursions. But these two characteristics are mutually compatible. «Jaw-jaw» was generally deemed preferable to «War-war». Time tended to be on the Byzantines' side, and inertia was inimical to the invading hosts' cohesion. Moreover, negotiating and gift-bearing made far less heavy demands on the Byzantine State's administrative competence and financial resources than warfare did. Perhaps the essential feature of the Byzantines' «wisdom» of which Liudprand wrote was their rulers' awareness of the *limitations* of their «wealth» and consequent caution in the conduct of foreign affairs.

A PROBLEM PICTURE OF THE EMPEROR JOHN VIII AND THE PATRIARCH JOSEPH

CHRISTOPHER WALTER / PARIS

When I first met Father Joseph Gill in Rome in 1959, he had just completed his masterly study of the Council of Florence.¹ Its publication was timely. In the ecumenical climate of the pontificate of John XXIII, it was hoped that the second Vatican Council, for which preparations were in progress, would be an occasion of *rapprochement* between East and West. Of all the great Councils, that of Florence offered the best model for that which was about to be held.

Although the union achieved at Florence was ephemeral, the impression made by the visitors from the East was lasting. Quattrocento artists were inspired by their luxurious and exotic costume. Not only did they receive commissions to represent the emperor John VIII and his retinue, but also they used them as models for other subjects.

The effigy of the patriarch Joseph above his tomb in Santa Maria Novella, Florence is unique, because none of the effigies of those buried in Constantinople have survived.² The patriarch is dressed in the liturgical vestment known as the *sakkos*, cut away at the sides like the Roman dalmatic. Over this, he wears a broad *omophorion*, the Eastern equivalent of the Roman *pallium*, decorated with crosses. He holds in both hands a Gospel Book, on which is represented the Crucifixion. This is an authentic detail, for it was customary to represent the Crucifixion on the cover of a Gospel Book.³ Above the effigy is an inscription in Greek: Joseph, Archbishop of Constantinople, the

¹ J. Gill, *The Council of Florence* (Cambridge, 1959).

² *Idem*, *Personalities of the Council of Florence* (Oxford, 1964), 15-34; A. Muñoz, 'Alcuni dipinti bizantini di Firenze', *Rivista d'arte*, 6 (1909), 115-119.

³ *Il Tesoro di San Marco*, ed. H. Hahnloser, II (Florence, 1971), no. 39.

New Rome, and Ecumenical Patriarch, year 6947 (1439). The drawing which accompanies his name in the list of bishops of Constantinople in *Paris. graec.* 1783, f. 98^v, so closely resembles his effigy as to seem to be a copy of it.⁴

There is a greater number of portraits of John VIII.⁵ Those which belong to the Byzantine tradition may easily be distinguished by the formalization of his features and by the rounded diadem, richly bejewelled, which he wears. He appears as a youthful prince in the frontispiece to the works of Dionysius the Areopagite, Louvre Ms. Ivoires 100, f. 2, which his father Manuel II (1319-1425) presented to the Abbey of Saint Denis, on the occasion of his visit to Paris.⁶ As a mature man, he is represented in the same manuscript as the patriarch Joseph, *Paris. graec.* 1783, f. 2bis, in *Paris. suppl. graec.* 1188, f. 4^v,⁷ and, in a gallery of portraits of Byzantine emperors, in Modena Biblioteca Estense *graec.* 122, f. 294^v.⁸

The Italian portraits invariably present the emperor wearing a quite different head-dress. It obviously impressed them, with its high conical crown, its broad brim and its long projecting peak. Two examples are attributed to Pisanello, a miniature in *Sinait. graec.* 2123, f. 30^v,⁹ and a bronze medal.¹⁰ A third example is provided by the bronze bust attributed to Filarete.¹¹

A series of reliefs, in which Filarete also had a hand, was executed to commemorate the council of Florence about 1445.¹² These decorate

⁴ I. Spatharakis, *The Portrait in Byzantine Illuminated Manuscripts* (Leiden, 1976), 234-235, fig. 177.

⁵ Gill, *Personalities* (note 2), 104-124.

⁶ Spatharakis, *Portraits* (note 4), 139-141, fig. 93.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 234-237, figs. 178, 179.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 172, 178-179, fig. 121g.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 51-53, fig. 20; M. Restle, 'Ein Porträt Johannes VIII. Palaiologos auf dem Sinai', *Festschrift Luitpold Dussler* (1972), 131-137; J.A. Fasaelli, 'Some Notes on Pisanello and the Council of Florence', *Master Drawings*, 3 (1965), 36-47, fig. 2.

¹⁰ G.F. Hill, *A Corpus of Italian Medals of the Renaissance* (1930), I, 7, no. 19; Spatharakis, *Portraits* (note 4), 53, fig. 21; B. Degenhart, 'Pisanello', *Encyclopedia of World Art*, XI (1966), 371.

¹¹ A. Muñoz, 'Un buste en bronze d'Antonio Filarete représentant l'empereur Jean Paléologue', *Comptes rendus de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres* (June 1907), 300-339; Spatharakis, *Portraits* (note 4), 53, fig. 22.

¹² M. Lazzaroni & A. Muñoz, *Filarete scultore e architetto del secolo XV* (Rome, 1908), 68ff.

one of the doors in the portico of Saint Peter's, Rome, and they may be situated in the long tradition of representing councils in pictorial form at the entry of a church.¹³ They offer a historical narrative of the Council of Florence: the departure of the Greeks from Constantinople, their arrival in Venice, the emperor kneeling before pope Eugenius IV, the proclamation of the Bull of Union, the departure of the Greeks and their embarkation at Venice for Constantinople. Here, as in his portraits, the emperor wears his distinctive head-dress, with a high crown and projecting peak.

It is this feature which makes it possible to recognize that portraits of John VIII served as a model for pictures of other persons. The best known example is provided by the picture of the Magi in the chapel of the Palazzo Medici-Riccardi, Florence, painted by Benozzo Gozzoli (1420-1497) in 1459.¹⁴ Indeed, Father Gill chose it to illustrate the cover of his history of the Council of Florence. The head-dress of the Magi is somewhat more elaborate than that depicted in portraits of the emperor. Nevertheless, the resemblance is evident. That the artist should assimilate the Wise Men from the East to the Byzantine delegates to the Council is ideologically interesting. However, it was, no doubt, the exotic character of their dress which particularly appealed to him.

Less well known are three panels, attributed to Pesellino, representing the Life of Saint Sylvester.¹⁵ In these, the artist has used the portrait of John VIII as a model for the emperor Constantine the Great. Pesellino (1422-1457) executed mainly small pictures, such as scenes for predellas, of which these three panels are probably examples.¹⁶ The series which he executed for San Marco, Florence, is dated to 1437.¹⁷ Art historians have generally considered the Sylvester panels also to be early works, although, of course, the Council of Florence (1437-1439) offers an obvious *terminus post quem*. The first and

¹³ Ch. Walter, *L'iconographie des conciles dans la tradition byzantine* (Paris, 1970), 121.

¹⁴ C. Shell, 'Benozzo Gozzoli', *Encyclopedia of World Art*, VI (1962), 665-671; VIII, pl. 193.

¹⁵ G. Kaftal, *Iconography of the Saints in Tuscan Painting* (Florence, 1952), no. 53, 929-938, figs. 1042, 1049, 1050.

¹⁶ Thieme-Becker, 26 (1932), 463-464.

¹⁷ W. Weisbach, *Francesco Pesellino und die Romantik der Renaissance* (Berlin, 1901), 48.

third panels, representing Sylvester before Tarquinius and Sylvester binding the mouth of a dragon after restoring two men to life, are now in the Galleria Doria-Pamphili, Rome.¹⁸

It is the second, now in the Art Museum, Worcester (Massachusetts), which particularly concerns us here.¹⁹ It can help, I believe, in the elucidation of our problem picture. (Fig. 1) The incident portrayed is that of Sylvester bringing a bull to life. The scene is set in the laboured linear perspective which was the mode during the Florentine Quattrocento. It is emphasized by the receding columns and the pattern on the central part of the floor. Sylvester, dressed like a 15th-century pope with a tiara, kneels in prayer. Before him, to the right of the scene, is the bull, its hindlegs already erect, gradually raising its forelegs. Standing figures in the background look on, while others are seated at each extremity. The empress Helena is enthroned to the right, and the emperor Constantine to the left. His head-dress is that of the emperor John VIII.²⁰ Another detail which should be mentioned in passing is that of the standing figure to the left of the scene, whose back is towards the beholder.

There has been no difficulty in the case of the pictures just described in distinguishing those which are historical representations of John VIII from those in which he has served as a model for the portrayal of other persons. However, it is not so evident to what category

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 43.

¹⁹ E.S. Siple, 'The Miracle of Saint Sylvester', *Bulletin of the Worcester Art Museum*, 17 i (April, 1926), 3-15; *European Paintings in the Collection of the Worcester Art Museum* (Worcester, Mass., 1974), 419-421. I thank Dr Richard Lamoureux of Assumption College, Worcester, for obtaining the photograph of this picture, also for help with the effigy of the patriarch Joseph.

²⁰ This marks a breakaway from earlier practice. In the cycle in the chapel of San Silvestro at the Quattro Coronati, Rome (1246), Constantine wears a bejewelled crown, A. Muñoz, *Il restauro della chiesa e del chiostro dei SS. Quattro Coronati* (Rome, 1914), 103, figs. 143-144; Ch. Walter, 'Papal Political Imagery in the Medieval Lateran Palace', *Cahiers archéologiques*, 21 (1971), 124, fig. 26; E. Bertaux, *L'art dans l'Italie méridionale, Aggiornamento*, ed. A. Prandi, IV (Rome, 1978), 531-532. For other forms of head-dress attributed to Constantine in Italian painting, see Kaftal, *Tuscan Painting* (note 15), no. 285, 930-938; *Idem*, *Iconography of the Saints in Central and South Italian Schools of Painting* (Florence, 1965), no. 365, 1027-1037. Only Piero della Francesca in his cycle for the Invention of the Cross in San Francesco, Arezzo (1452-1466), attributes the head-dress of John VIII to Constantine in the scene of the Battle of the Milvian Bridge, Kaftal, *Tuscan Painting*, no. 74, fig.

the problem picture should be assigned. This is a representation of a miracle performed by Saint Bernardine of Siena. (Fig. 2). It forms part of a series of eight pictures of his miracles, which once decorated an oratory dedicated to him in Perugia.²¹ It is now in the Pinacoteca Van-nucci, Perugia. It was long attributed to Fiorenzo di Lorenzo (ca. 1445-ca. 1525) and dated ca. 1473. Latterly, the attribution has been called in doubt.²²

The miracle in question is described in the *Acts* of Saint Bernardine.²³ Bernardine (8.ix. 1380-20.v. 1444) was a Franciscan friar, particularly esteemed for his preaching activity. He was canonized in 1450, six years after his death. The *Acts*, which give a list both of the miracles which he performed during his life and of those which were posthumous, attribute that of restoring life to a boy thrown to the ground by a wild bull to his lifetime. The incident occurred while Saint Bernardine was preaching in Prato. He is known to have been there during May and June, 1424.²⁴ According to the *Acts*, the wild bull entered the gates of the city and threw a number of people to the ground, including the son of Niccolo di Lorenzo.²⁵ The boy lay there as if dead. Saint Bernardine, however, raised his eyes to heaven, prayed to God for him, made the sign of the cross, blessed him and then said: «Thanks to God, he will be well; take him away».

Two stages of the same action are represented in the picture. To the right, the bull has thrown the boy to the ground; to the left, Saint Bernardine is restoring him to life. There is an elaborate architectural background, which occupies three-quarters of the picture space. The receding lines of the patterned floor are again rendered in a laboured linear perspective, although executed with more sophistication than in the Pesellino picture, painted perhaps thirty years earlier. To the left, in the foreground, stand two persons, one of whom wears a head-dress of the kind associated with John VIII. The head-dress of the other has

²¹ Kaftal, *Central and South Italian Schools*, no. 55, figs. 222, 226, 228, 231, 235. The article by F. Zeri in the *Bollettino d'arte*, 38 (1953), 233-239, has not been accessible to me.

²² There seems now to be a consensus that this series of pictures was executed by Perugino and assistants, F. Santi, 'Perugino', *Encyclopedia of World Art*, XI (1966), 269.

²³ *Acta sanctorum maii*, V (Antwerp, 1685), 267*.

²⁴ K. Rathe, 'Bernardino da Siena', *Encyclopedia cattolica*, II, 1411-1416.

²⁵ The name Niccolo was also attributed to the boy himself.

a similar conical crown, but the wide brim has no peak. The venerable white beard suggests that the model for him would have been a portrait of the patriarch Joseph.²⁶

The question arises whether this picture is to be considered historical, or whether, as in the Pesellino picture, the emperor and patriarch have served as models for two other persons. Other scholars have considered that these are, indeed, two portrait figures, without, however, attempting to explain why the emperor and patriarch should be present when Saint Bernardine wrought a miracle.²⁷ Strictly, the picture cannot be historical, for the miracle took place in 1424, fifteen years before the Council of Florence. Moreover the author of the *Acts of Saint Bernardine* does not commit the anachronism of suggesting that they were present.

After the canonization of Saint Bernardine in 1450, there was a certain demand for pictures of his miracles. Besides the series in Perugia, there are three other known cycles. There are the predellas at San Francesco, Macerata, and the frescoes at San Francesco, Montefalco.²⁸ However, the most famous was the cycle of frescoes painted by Pinturichio in Santa Maria in Aracoeli, Rome.²⁹ Only this last includes the miracle of restoring the boy to life, which is relegated to the background of Saint Bernardine's deathscene. It is on a very small scale, and includes only the prostrate figure of the boy and the bull.

Since Saint Bernardine's canonization was so recent, iconographical types had to be created for his miracles. An artist would be tempted to adapt the iconography of a miracle wrought by another saint. I suggest that, in the present case, the artist who painted Saint Bernardine's miracle copied the picture of that wrought by Saint Sylvester.

²⁶ Apparently the patriarch Joseph was at least eighty years old when he died, I. Dujčev, 'A propos de la biographie de Joseph II, patriarche de Constantinople', *Revue des études byzantines*, 19 (1961), 333-339.

²⁷ V. Laurent, *Les 'Mémoires' du Grand Ecclésiarque de l'Eglise de Constantinople Sylvestre Syropoulos sur le concile de Florence* (Rome, 1971), 713-715, fig. 4; Spatharakis, *Portraits* (note 4), 235.

²⁸ Kaftal, *Central and South Italian Schools* (note 20), no. 55; *Idem*, *Tuscan Painting* (note 15), no. 48, for other examples.

²⁹ Kaftal, *Central and South Italian Schools*, fig. 227.

He would have chosen it because both miracles were concerned with a bull. Some adaptation was necessary. The receding lines of the floor pattern in the centre have been retained, but the obstructing architectural columns have been eliminated. The figure with his back to the beholder has been moved into the centre, and now serves the purpose of separating the two episodes. The part concerned with the bull has been set on the right, while Saint Bernardine, accompanied by a friar, kneels to the left, in a posture similar to that of Saint Sylvester. The boy, like the bull, is coming back to life. The spectators in both pictures stand in the background.

The person resembling John VIII occupies the same position in the composition of the picture of Saint Bernardine's miracle as Constantine in that of Saint Sylvester. If I am right in thinking that the former composition is an adaptation of the latter, then the figure of Constantine may have inspired the artist to introduce these two exotic persons. However, some further motive would have been necessary.

Since Saint Bernardine was a contemporary of John VIII and Joseph, it is likely that these two persons are intended to be genuine representations of them. The saint was interested in the issues at stake at the Council of Florence, to which he came, although he did not frequent the sessions with great assiduity. He was, in fact, fully occupied with his preaching and with reforming the Order of Friars Minor. In 1438, when the Council moved from Basle to Ferrara and thence to Florence, he was appointed Vicar General of the reformed branch, the *Osservanti*. However, he had sent friars to Ethiopia. Delegates came to the Council from Ethiopia and the Indies. Their reports on the work of evangelization undertaken there were of moment to him.³⁰

There is also an account in the *Acts* of a miracle which directly concerns the relations between Saint Bernardine and the Greeks.³¹ Regretting that he could not himself speak Greek and enter directly into dialogue with them, he prayed for the gift of tongues, which he received. He was thus able to present the tenets of Catholic doctrine to them. The Greeks were impressed by his eloquence; they observed that he spoke their language as if he had been born among them.

³⁰ *Acta* (note 23), 261*, 282*.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 311*.

This miracle is not included explicitly in the Saint Bernardine cycles. Yet I suggest that there is an allusion to it in our problem picture, which does not belong to either of the categories mentioned above, but rather to that of hagiography. Cycles of lives of saints were intended to be didactic. In order to make his point, the artist was allowed a certain licence. He could perpetrate anachronisms. As we have seen, Pinturichio introduced the miracle of restoring the boy to life into his picture of the death of Bernardine. He implied that, while the saint could restore life to others, he himself could not escape mortality.

In such pictures, it is necessary to seek out the sense of their juxtapositions. The significance of the picture of Saint Sylvester restoring life to the bull was that, by doing so, he demonstrated the superiority of Christian doctrine to pagan philosophy. In our problem picture it is implied that the miracle wrought by Saint Bernardine had some part in convincing the emperor and patriarch of the authenticity of Catholic teaching, and in preparing them to sign the Bull of Union with Rome.

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Fig. 1. MS Paris B.N. Contes 13 fol. 1r. Patriarch Mark





fig. 3. Washington, Freer Gallery No. 55, 11r. Four Evangelists



fig. 4. MS Rome, Bibl. Vat. Copto 9 fol. 22r, Christ with St. Matthew
(Photo: Bibliotheca Apostolica Vaticana)



fig. 5. MS Rome, Bibl. Vat. Gr. 756 fols. 11v-12r, Christ and the Evangelists
(Photo: Bibliotheca Apostolica Vaticana)



fig. 5. MS Rome, Bibl. Vat. Gr. 756 fols. 11v-12r, Christ and the Evangelists
(Photo: Bibliotheca Apostolica Vaticana)

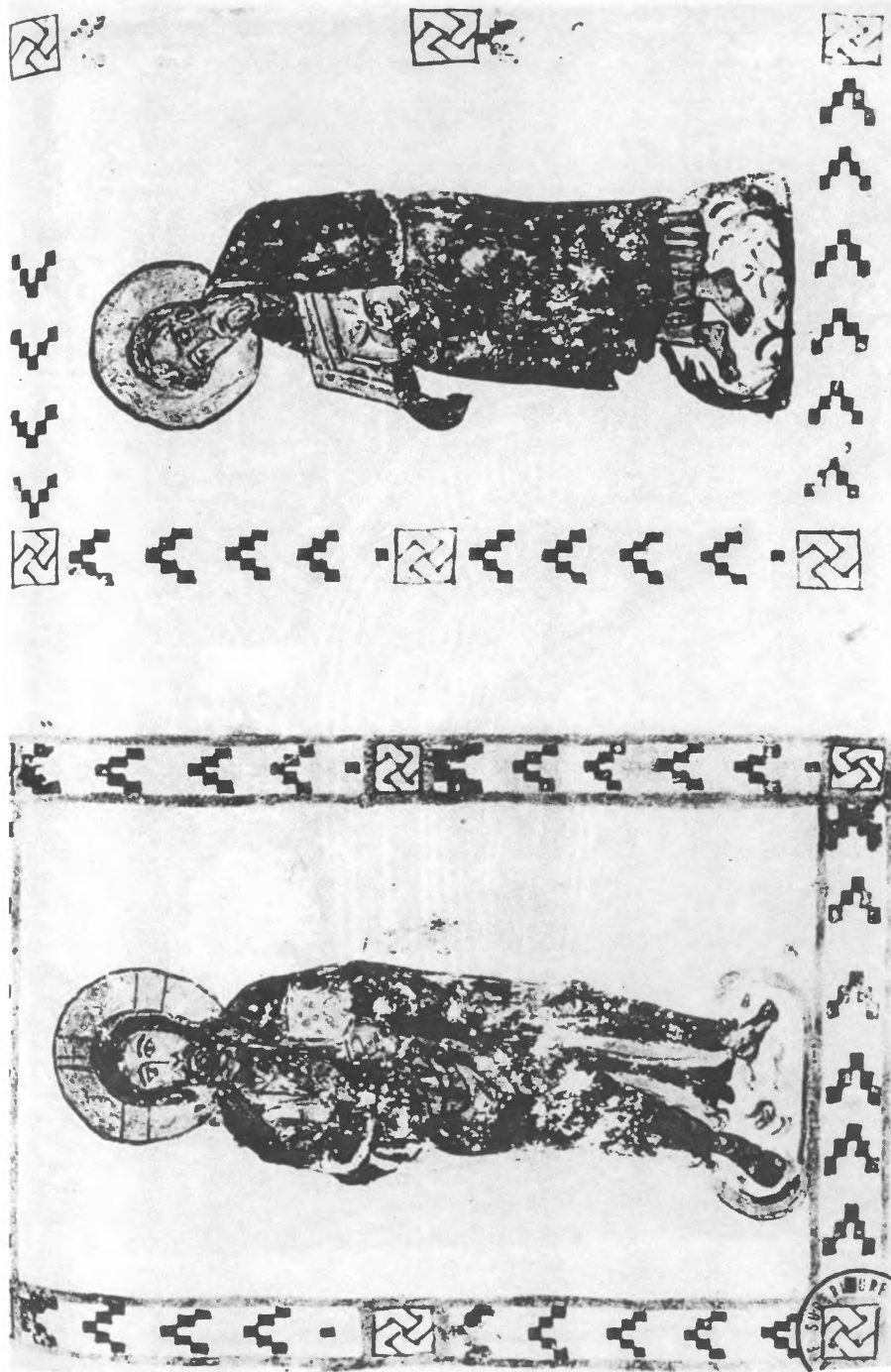


fig. 6. MS Paris, B.N. Syr. 41 fols. 178v-179r, Christ and an Evangelist
(Photo: Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris)



fig. 7. MS Istanbul, Lib. Topkapu Sarayi Müzesi, Ahmet III, 2127 fols. 1v-2r, Dioscorides with students

(Photo: Reproduced from Ettinghausen, *Arab Painting* pp. 68-9



fig. 7. MS Istanbul, Lib. Topkapu Sarayı Müzesi, Ahmet III, 2127 fols. 1v-2r, Dioscorides with



fig. 8. MS Paris, B.N. Ar. 6094 fol. 6r, Makāma I. Abū Zayd as a Pilgrim
 (Photo: Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris)



fig. 9. MS Oxford, Bodl. Lib. Arab. d. 138, fol. 2v, Dioscorides
(Photo: Bodleian Library, Oxford)



fig. 10. MS London, B.L. Or. 2784 fols. 2v-3r, Ibn Bakhtishū and student
(Photo: British Library)

(LEFT SIDE)



fig. 10. MS London, B.L. Or. 2784 fols. 2v-3r, Ibn Bakhtishū and student



fig. 11. MS London, V. and A. Museum, Lustreware Bowl (C. 49-1952)
(Photo: Victoria and Albert Museum, Crown Copyright)



fig. 12. Paris, Musée du Louvre, Wooden panels of Evangelists (Département des Antiquités égyptiennes, E. 14284, E 14285)

(Photo: Musée du Louvre)

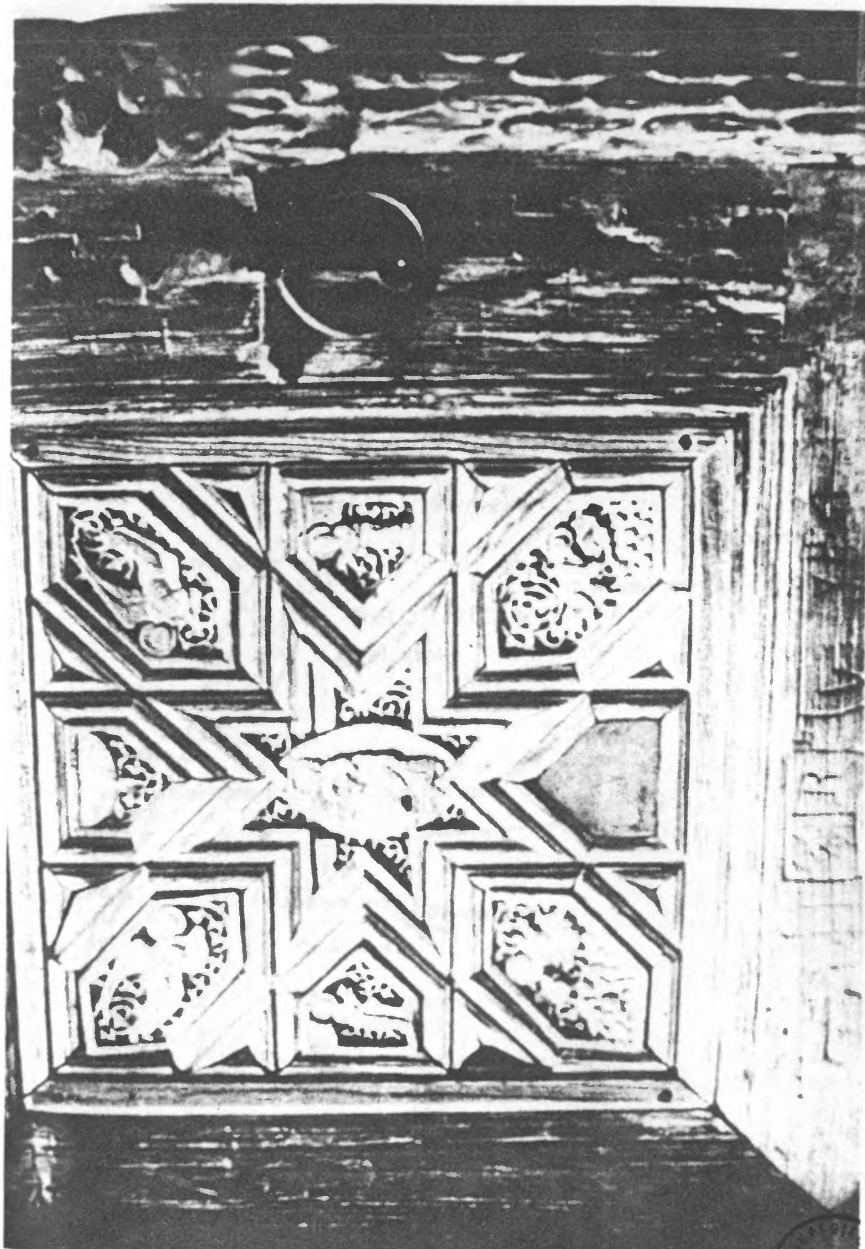
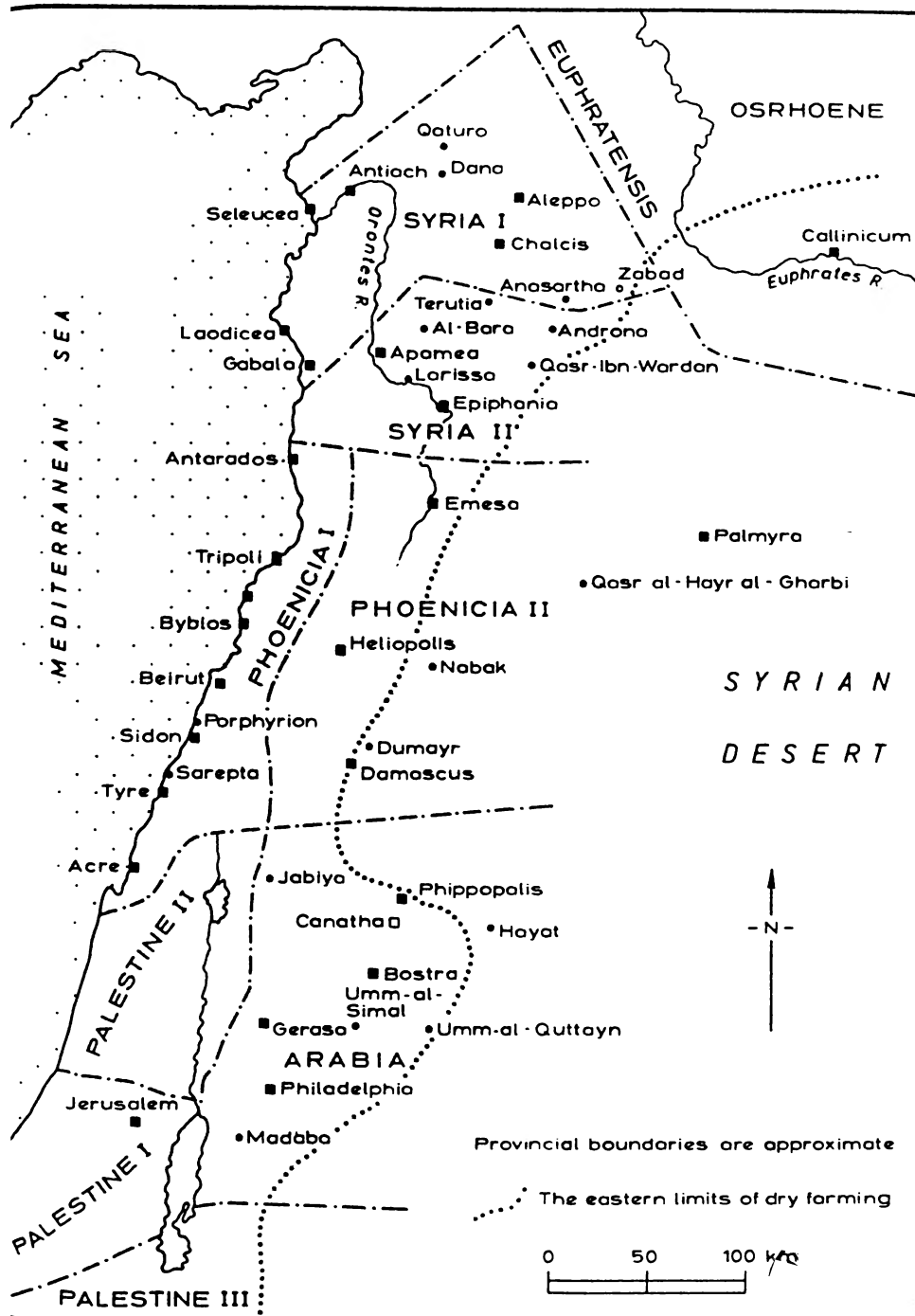


fig. 13. Church of St. Catherine's Monastery, Mount Sinai. Narthex, Outer Door Panel
(Photo: Dr. Y. Tsafir)



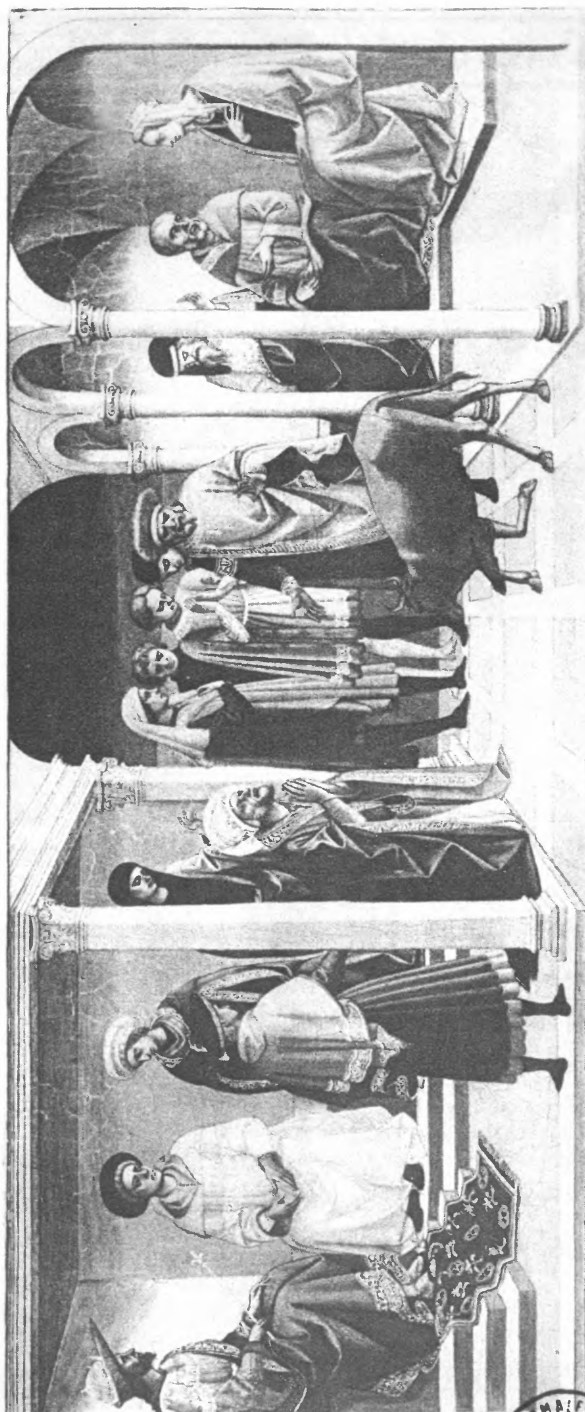


Fig. 1 Saint Sylvester restores life to a bull. Pesellino, Worcester Art Museum. (credit line: Worcester Art Museum)

